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THE
BROKEN FONT.

A
STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "TALES OF THE WARS OF OUR TIMES,"
"RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PENINSULA,"
&c. &c. &c.

25

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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PREFACE.

It is impossible to read or meditate concerning that period of history in which the scene and action of my tale are laid without partaking of the feelings of both parties in that great quarrel, and “being (in an innocent sense) on both sides.”

In such a spirit has my story been conceived and written. Until the sword was drawn, the more generous and constitutional Royalists were separated by but a faint line from the best and most patriotic men of the Parliament party.

I have, however, confined myself more particularly to the contemplation of those miseries and violent acts of persecution which the appeal

to arms brought upon many private families, and especially upon those of the clergy.

In the contrivance of such a fiction, it became necessary to introduce pictures of fanaticism and hypocrisy, and to describe scenes of cruelty and of low interested persecution; but such parts of the story must not be considered separately from the rest. The general tenor of my volumes will, I trust, be found in strict consistency with that charity that "thinketh no evil," but "hopeth all things."

THE BROKEN FONT.

CHAPTER I.

Thus till man end, his vanities goe round,
In credit here, and there discredited ;
Striving to binde, and never to be bound ;
To governe God, and not bee governed :
Which is the cause his life is thus confused,
In his corruption, by these arts abused.

LOLD BROOKE.

IT was the early afternoon of a fine open day in the last week of April, in the year 1640. The sun shone warm ; not a breath of wind was stirring the tender foliage of the tall trees, or the delicate flower of the lowly harebell beneath the hedge-rows. All was still, save that at intervals the voice of the cuckoo was heard — loud, but yet mellow — from the bosom of a neighbouring wood. The swains in

the field lay stretched in the shade, as though summer were already come: in gardens and court-yards not a sound of labour or a clatter of life disturbed the silence of the hour.

In a shady alcove, which looked out on the bowling alley of Milverton House, sate the worthy old master of the mansion, with one leg crossed over the other, a book upon his knee, and a kindly smile playing across his manly features. Not far distant, upon the steps which led up to the near end of a stately terrace, was seated a fair little girl, about six years of age. A thick laurel protected her with its shadow; and it might be seen by the paper in her hand, by the motion of her lips, and by the sway of her little head and neck, that she was committing some task to memory, with that pleasure that makes a pastime even out of a lesson. Out on the smooth green an old flap-mouthed hound, whose hunting days were long past, lay basking in the sun, among the dispersed bowls, which the last players had idly neglected to put away; and with them a boy's bow and arrow had been left, or forgotten, on the ground.

The child's murmur was lower than the soft coo from the dove-cote, or the gentle music of the fountain; and there was a hush of quiet about all these whispers of created life that was in harmony with the general silence.

The shadow of the dial had crept on nearly half an hour before this repose was broken. It was so at last, by a hot boy of fourteen, with vest unbuttoned, and without a hat, who came to seek his bow and arrow. The glad cry of "I have found them!" dispelled the silence: the little girl thrust her paper into her bosom, and jumped up at the sound of the welcome voice; and the old man looked up, and, putting his book down on the seat beside him, scolded the noble boy for having left the bowls out to be scorched and injured by the sun.

With no abatement of good humour, the cheerful boy, eagerly helped by the little girl, gathered them up, and carried them into the bowl-house. The old hound was too much accustomed to the thing even to stir for it, though one of the bowls almost touched his nose.

This duty done, the boy, upon whose mind one thing lay uppermost, with that abruptness which belongs to nature and to boyhood, propounded to his great-uncle, Sir Oliver Heywood, the following most startling question : —

“ Was it not, sir, a very wicked thing to cut off Mr. Prynne’s ears ? ”

Had it suddenly thundered the old knight could not have been more surprised ; and, if a wasp had stung him in a tender place, he could not have been less pleased.

“ Master Prynne ! what do you know about Master Prynne, you foolish boy ? ”

“ O, I know — I know very well ! they cut off his ears because he didn’t like plays ; and that was very cruel ! What a shame it would be to cut off the ears of old Josh. Cross, that takes care of your hawks, because he didn’t like to hear Stephen play upon the fiddle ! ”

“ Why, Arthur, what has come to you, boy ? who has been teaching you this nonsense ? If Master Prynne had lost his head, instead of his ears, it would be no more than he deserved, and I hope he may live to own it.”

At this rebuke the boy coloured, and hung his head; but added, as if pleading for his fault, —

“It was Master Noble said so; and you know, sir, you have told us all to mind what he says, for he is always in the right.”

Sir Oliver bade him hastily go play; and the boy, taking his little niece by the hand, they ran out of the bowling-green at one angle, while the good old knight, not a little discomposed by the incident, ascended slowly to the terrace. Here he found old Philip, the keeper of the buttery, seated at the far end, in the shade, in the calm enjoyment of a pipe. Instead of the wonted word of pleasant greeting, Sir Oliver told him, in a rough tone, to go and seek instantly for Master Noble, and send him thither.

While the kind old serving man went away with his message in no comfortable mood — for the young tutor was as great a favourite in kitchen as in hall — the old gentleman paced the terrace with a leisurely and thoughtful step; and made frequent stops and soliloquies on the

strange and unexpected words and sentiments which he had just heard from the lips of his open and artless boy. While thus engaged, we will leave him for a few moments to place before our reader the state of the family at the time of which we write.

At the village of Milverton, in Warwickshire, upon a sweet spot above the valley of the Avon, Sir Oliver Heywood, the descendant of a successful and honoured merchant, occupied a fair and pleasant mansion erected in the reign of Elizabeth by his wealthy father.

The family at Milverton House consisted of the worthy knight, a maiden sister, his daughter—an only child—and a boy who was the son of a favourite nephew slain in the German wars, in which he had been led to engage as a diversion of his grief on the loss of a beloved wife.

In addition to these regular members of the family there was a little orphan girl, whom his benevolent sister had adopted. This sister, Mistress Alice, was two years the junior of Sir Oliver, and had attained the age of sixty-one. She had taken up her abode with him at the

death of Lady Heywood, about four years before the period of which we now speak.

Katharine, his daughter, was in her twentieth year, and his nephew's son was about fourteen years of age.

Master Noble, of whom mention has been made, was tutor to the boy Arthur, and resided with the family.

This young scholar was the son of an old school-fellow and friend of Sir Oliver's, who held the benefice of Cheddar, in Somersetshire. Cuthbert Noble, like his father before him, had been educated at William of Wykeham's school of Winchester; but not succeeding so far as to obtain a fellowship at New College, Oxford, which is the usual aim and reward of the scholars upon the Winchester foundation, he had proceeded to Cambridge, and there graduated with good report. He had been now six months at Milverton.

Sir Oliver's birthday was ever a high festival at the manor-house. This year it was the pleasure of his daughter to celebrate it by a masque; and all the arrangements for this masque were

referred by Mistress Katharine to Cuthbert Noble. He cheerfully undertook them; and having gained some experience in these matters at college, and having some skill in painting, set himself to prepare scenes — then a very recent invention. As, with a painting brush in his hand, he was standing before a scene, nearly finished, and dashing in the white and foamy water upon canvass, that was fast changing into a torrent, falling from rocks, and rushing through a lonely glen, — and as he stood back surveying the effect, and humming the fragment of a song, Philip came slowly up the gallery, and said gravely, —

“ Master Cuthbert, Sir Oliver wants to speak with you directly.”

“ Where is he?”

“ In the garden, on the lower terrace; and I wish he was looking more pleasant: — it’s my thought, Master, there’s something wrong; for it is not a small matter that can vex him.”

Cuthbert put down his brush and palette, and proceeded slowly towards the terrace. As he was descending the wide steps which led to

it, he could not but observe that the good knight was serious, if not angry.

“ Master Cuthbert,” said Sir Oliver with an air of gravity and displeasure, “ I have sent for you to hear from your own lips some little explanation or defence of a matter that hath come to my knowledge by the accident of a child’s artless utterance. It may be that it was only a word lightly dropped by you — a passing levity — a lapsus of the tongue, not of the judgment — such an indiscretion as I may pass over in one of your unripe age and little experience, without further correction than a faithful reproof, and a timely warning of the danger of such vain observations, and of their unsuitableness and impropriety in one who fills so important an office in my family, and hath so far enjoyed my confidence as to have doubtless a great influence for evil or for good.”

This long preface Sir Oliver delivered, pacing slowly on the terrace with his eyes bent upon the ground. Cuthbert walked by his side, anxious for the direct charge, now too plainly whispered from within by his own swift thoughts.

Sir Oliver paused, and, looking full and steadily upon the serious countenance of the youthful tutor, demanded of him whether it were true that he had said publicly before any of his family or household, that it was a barbarous and cruel thing to cut off Master Prynne's ears?

"I certainly so expressed myself," was the calm answer of Cuthbert.

"Where and to whom did you thus speak?"

"It was in the library—the lady Alice was present, and Master Arthur was there at his lesson."

"And are these the lessons that you teach in my house and to my children?—know you, sir, that Master Prynne is a traitor—that he speaketh evil of dignities, and soweth disloyalty—that he is a hypocrite and a fanatic?"

"Sir Oliver," said Cuthbert, "there was no discourse upon this matter, save only the one remark of which you question me:—this fell from my heart when your good sister read out some news of him—and thereupon the lady Alice went forth without a word; for I presume not

to intrude my poor thoughts of court affairs upon any one in this house. I know my place better."

"Life of me! Thou dost not confess thy fault — thou dost not say thy pænitet for teaching this false lesson to my child!"

"I would not be slow to speak out my sorrow and shame if I felt them, but I am conscience-whole in this thing,—and my few words did give no other lesson than one of plain humanity."

"Master Cuthbert, I do believe thee a true and gentle youth, of best intentions, and thou comest of a good stock. Thy father is my good friend from the gladsome days when we were school-fellows together at St. Mary, Winton; and where hath church or state a better parson or better subject than he? therefore, I would for his sake, as for thine own, entreat thee mildly. Youth is warm and tender, and wanting a far sight to the great end of punishment — the axe might rust and the scourge gather cobwebs before hearts like thine would give rogues their due."

"I am of sterner stuff, Sir Oliver, than to

wish a rogue safe from the beadle, or a traitor from the headsman ; but I am not so taught as to think the mistakes of a severe piety treasons deserving of torture."

" Odd's life ! I see how it is—thou art bitten by these gloomy fanatics — the venom is in thy veins : — well for me that I have seen its first workings. By my fathers ! these new papists, these worse Carthusians, would drive sunshine from the earth, and kill the flowers, and stop the singing of birds, and give us a world of rock and clouds—hard as their stony hearts, and gloomy as their cold minds ! Master Cuthbert, we must part. I'll not have the path of my boy shadowed over before it be God's will. The earth is green and goodly, and pleasant to the eyes ; and long may his heart rejoice in it, as mine has before him. Look you, we must part."

" At your pleasure I came, Sir Oliver, and I am ready, at your pleasure, to return to my father's. My stay with you has been short, and I would fain hope that I have not failed in my duty to you. May you be more fortunate in

your choice of a tutor for Master Arthur than you have been in me!"

Cuthbert spoke these words with so much self-command that not one syllable trembled in the utterance; yet the tone was at once mournful and resolved.

The better feelings of Sir Oliver were touched: the expression of his eye showed plainly that he was repenting of his hastiness, relenting in his decision. What his reply might have been, may, in its spirit, be easily imagined; but a sudden interruption checked the words that were rising to his lips; and a sounder and more prudential reason for desiring the departure of Cuthbert was presented to his judgment than any objection which could have been urged at that time, with any semblance of fairness, against his errors as a churchman, or his sins as a subject.

"Master Noble," called a rich clear voice from above them, — "Master Noble, we poor players do wait your pleasure, and are ready with our parts; but we cannot go on with our rehearsal till the manager doth come to us."

Looking up, Sir Oliver saw his daughter leaning over the balustrade, with a paper in one hand, and a tall wand wreathed with flowers in the other; and, as he turned his eyes upon Cuthbert Noble, the strong emotions with which Cuthbert was evidently struggling did not escape his observation.

“ I have business with him just now, Kate,” said her father : “ go thy way. He shall come to thee in the hall anon.” But as he spoke, the boy Arthur came down the steps, leading in his hand the little girl ; and, running up to Cuthbert with joyous eagerness, cried out, “ Kitten can do her part — she can say every word quite perfect — you must hear her.” With that, the little girl letting go his hand, and putting back her sunny curls, which had fallen over her blue eyes, repeated, with an air of sweet intelligence and pretty innocence, these lines : —

“ I do childhood represent,
Listen to my argument :
Mine the magic power to bring
Pleasure out of every thing ;

Sunbeams, flowers, and summer air,
Music, wonders, visions fair,
All my happy steps attend ;
Mine is peace without an end ;—
All things are at peace with me,
Beast in field, and bird on tree ;
The sheep that lie upon the grass
Never stir as I do pass ;
If by the singing bird I stray,
He never quits his chosen spray ;
If to the squirrel's haunt I go,
He comes with curious eye below ;
Earth and I are full of love,
I fear no harm from Heav'n above,
For there, as here, all things do tell
A Father God doth surely dwell :—
O ! could I be a child alway,
How happy were life's holyday ! ”

The countenance of Sir Oliver recovered all its wonted expression of good humour, as the child prettily recited these lines; and patting her on the head, as she concluded, he turned to Cuthbert and said, in his usual kind tone, “ We will talk our matter over another time: I see that you are no joy-killer, and would never mar an innocent pleasure-making — I was ever fond of a good play — a pox on these prick-eared knaves that would forbid them !

“ ‘ Why kings and emperors have taen delight
To make experience of their wits in plays,’

as Master Kyd hath it, in his Spanish tragedy.”

Cuthbert said nothing ; but having a recollection of the passage from which Sir Oliver had quoted, thought he might have found a more comfortable sanction and a much better authority.

“ But, prithee,” continued Sir Oliver, “ whose rhymes be these that the child has just spoken?”

“ They are my poor doggerel,” answered Cuthbert; “ for this dear child would give me no rest till I made a part for her in the Birthday Masque.”

“ Marry,” rejoined the knight, “ the fancy of them pleaseth me, and for the verse I care not.”

They all now turned to ascend the steps; and as they did so, apparent at the same instant to both Sir Oliver and Cuthbert was Mistress Katharine, leaning over the balustrade of the upper terrace, with an air of grave and perplexed curiosity.

As soon as they reached the top, which was level with the lawn in front of the mansion, Katharine caught Kitten in her arms, kissed

her fair brow, and ran with her towards the house; the happy child calling out the while, "Come along, Master Noble, pray, come," and at the same time clapping together her two little hands at thought of the coming pleasure.

CHAP. II.

“White, I dare not say good, witches (for woe be to him that calleth evil good!) heal those that are hurt, and help them to lost goods.

“Methinks she should bewitch to herself a golden mine, at least good meat, and whole clothes.”

FULLER'S *Profane State*.

WHILE a select few among the maidens and the serving men, who were, to their great contentment, to figure beneath strange dresses and uncouth vizards in the antimasque, and while some neighbouring gentles of quality, who were to take part in the masque itself, were rehearsing in the hall, old Philip, the butler, betook himself to the outer gate, and there sitting down on the porter's stone, replenished his pipe, and fell a-thinking about Sir Oliver and Master Noble. But the more he thought, the more he was puzzled; and so he opened his vest to catch the breeze from the valley, and smoked

with half-closed eyes, too much accustomed to the glorious scene before him to be always moved by its beauties. Below him, in the rich bottom of the vale, flowed the shining Avon. The white foam of the water at Guy's mill might be seen, and the rush of it might be almost heard.

The cliff of the renowned Guy presented a fine scarp of stone, the summit of which was overhung with knotted and rude shrubs of a fantastic growth; and far away to the left, at a distance of two miles, might be seen the lordly towers, and the tall and ivied wall of Warwick Castle. Such were the objects, which might, we say, have been discerned from the spot where old Philip sate, together with broad and pleasant meadows, well stocked with kine and sheep, and many goodly trees of a stately size, and many a distant coppice of rich underwood. Doubtless the old man had often felt the glad influence of that scene,—but now, overcome with heat, tobacco, and the labour of perplexed guesses about the grave mood of his master, he fell fast asleep. Philip was one of those good

faithful old creatures whose world was his master's, and whose greatest sin was the love of victual. This sin was duly punished by black dreams; and now, as he lay snoring against the wall, his indulgence over a rich mutton pie at dinner was visited with the terrors of one of those nightmare visions with which he was deservedly familiar. He dreamed that it was the statute fair, and that they were roasting an ox whole in the market-place of Warwick. The frontlet of the poor beast was gaily gilded, and the horns were painted blue, and gilt at the tips. The mighty spit turned slowly round. On one side stood a fat cook basting the brown loins that the beast might not burn, and on the other a stout and expert carver occasionally stopped the rude spit, and with a long broad knife detached savoury portions for the greedy by-standers, who, on receiving the same, dropped their penny of thanks into the cap of the carver, and, slipping out of the crowd, made way for others. Dreams are to the dreamer realities. Philip's mouth watered: he thought he had never before seen beef so delicious; fat and

lean in their exact proportions; the meat of the finest grain, juicy, and full of gravy; but then his suit, his badge, his pride of place, forbade his wishes: partake of the dainty he could not, but he might go near, just out of curiosity, and for mere amusement. Lo and behold! with an angry bellow forth leaped the furious beast, his eyes all fire, the spit point issuing from his foaming mouth, his carcass smoking and dripping, and half the sirloins cut away. He singled old Philip from the crowd; he lowered his blue and gilded horns; he shook the spit between his grinning teeth; and as he made his rush, old Philip died a thousand deaths in one, and woke into another world, — that other he had so shortly quitted. Nor was the object on which his waking eyes first rested exactly calculated to compose his terrors. A crowd of noisy clowns was standing round him; and in the midst of them, upon a hurdle, they bore an old withered and bony woman, crooked and blear-eyed, who was counted the witch of that neighbourhood, and well known by the name of yellow Margery of the Sand Pit.

They set down the hurdle close at Philip's feet, and called loudly for justice and Sir Oliver. "Hag!"—"Crone!"—"Beldame!"—"To the faggot!"—"To the river,"—"Justice in the King's name!"—were the various cries by which the impatient rustics frightened all the household of Milverton from their propriety and their pleasures, and brought most of them forth to the gate, and the rest to the hall steps, or the casements. Sir Oliver himself came forth, among the first, loudly rating them. "Why, how now, ye rude varlets; is Milverton a pot-house, and the seat of justice an ale bench? Speak—what would you?—speak, you, Morton,—you should know better than to head a rabble rout of this fashion."

"Why then, troth, Sir Oliver, as thou art a worshipful knight, and a king's justice, not man, woman, nor child in the whole parish can sup their porridge in peace or sleep o' nights for this old witch Margery: we've crown witness enough to hang, drown, and burn her twenty times over."

"Not so fast, not so fast, neighbour," said Sir Oliver, seating himself on the stone from which old Philip had retired melting with fear.

"Where are the witnesses, and what have they to say? Let them stand forth."

"First, here's Master Crumble, the clerk; then, afore him, here's Master Screw, the great witch-finder from Coventry; and here's Jock, my carter; and old Blow, the blacksmith, and Pollard, your worship's woodman."

"Stop, stop, I can't hear all at once, — say thy say, Crumble."

"Why, your worship, my sow — your worship, my sow is dead: all of a sudden, this blessed morn, as I poured out her wash, down she lay all in the shivers; and if the poor dumb creature had been her own flesh and blood, my old woman could not ha' taken on more. Says I, directly, 'This is a bit of Margery's work; for I see her brush the old sow with her black petticoat at the lane end, Sunday was a week.' It's quite a plain case you see, Sir Oliver."

"Stand back, you silly man."

"Silly, forsooth. I am thirty-seven year clerk of the parish, come next Lammas, and I say it's writ on the Bible, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.'"

“That is true enough—it is so ; but how do you know a witch ?”

“Why, I know that a man’s not a witch.”

“That is true, thou art a man and no witch. But how dost thou know one ?”

“Why, it is an old woman, not to say any one, but a crook back, with a hooked nose, and a peaked chin like Margery.”

“Master Crumble, I have done with thee, and in the matter of thy sow’s death do acquit Margery.”

“That’s not crown law, nor Gospel charity,” said the old clerk, as he stepped back into the crowd, who muttered and whispered among each other till the next witness spoke out. This was the witch-finder.

“Please your worship, I am ready to make oath that she hath a familiar, always about her in the shape of a brown mouse ; for I have seen it crawling about her neck, and playing and feeding in her hand.”

Here there was a mixed utterance of triumph and horror in the crowd, and Sir Oliver himself looked grave.

“What dost thou answer to this, Margery?”

“They say true in that they say I have a tame mouse ; and haven’t court ladies their monkeys, and their parrots, and their squirrels, and their white mice,—and why mayn’t an old lone woman have her pet as well as they ?” As thus she spoke, she held out her open hand, and a lively brown mouse sat up quietly on the palm seemingly quite tame. There was a slight shudder ran through the veins of all present ; and Cuthbert Noble, fearing lest this mode of defence might rather hinder than help her, went up to advise her better.

“A warm blessing on you, Master Noble, — the blessing of one whom you have saved before, and are trying to save again.”

Here Cuthbert stopped her, and observed to Sir Oliver aloud, that this mouse was but such a pet as a shepherd’s boy might play with, and that the old woman, whose ways were odd, had once told him that when she was a child and her little brother died, she had taken to a field mouse which he had petted, and that she had ever since as one died procured another.

The worthy knight was now for discharging Margery; but Farmer Morton insisted that they should hear his carter's story. Accordingly Jock stepped forward, and smoothing down his hair said, — "Please your worship, I lost my best startups (high shoes) the day before last cattle fair, and precious mad I was; and Sukey Sly told me if I went to old Margery, and took her a wheaten loaf, and crossed her palm with a silver penny, she'd tell me where to find 'em. Well, I went, and the old woman said she didn't want to have aught to say to me. 'Look ye,' says I, 'Margery, here I be, here's the bread and here's the money: I ha' lost my startups, and you must tell me where to find them; and I wo'n't budge till you do.' So with that she puts her mouse down against the loaf, and finely he nibbled away, and she set of a brown stud for a bit, and then told me to wait for the first full moon, and then, exactly at midnight, to walk backwards from the yard gate to the dung mixen, with my eyes fixed on the moon, and that I should find them on the mixen; but if it were before or after twelve o'clock, and if I looked behind me, or took my eyes off the moon,

the charm would be broke, and I should never see my startups again ; and sure enough I never have seen 'em."

There was a little titter among the women ; and Sukey Sly, whose legs were set off in a pair of new red stockings, could not suppress a laugh at Jock's story : but the clowns called out for justice, and Sir Oliver had much ado to pacify them. He did so at last, by assuring the old woman, that, on condition she told what was the great charm by which she was said to cure diseases, she should be set free.

"Cure diseases ! God bless you, Master ! why I'm a poor helpless old body, that can't cure myself, and should starve but for pity," said Margery. "However, may be, once or so in a quarter there comes some wilful body like Jock, with a tied-up face, and makes a witch of me, whether or no, and will have the charm. Then I take his loaf and his money, and I say, —

" ' My loaf in my lap,
My penny in my purse ;
Thou art never the better ;
I 'm never the worse. ' "

This confession was followed by laughter, in which most joined; and, except the clerk of the parish and the balked witch-finder, all dispersed in such good humour, that the poor old crone was released from her hurdle and her troublesome attendants, and, with a basket of broken meat and a bottle of ale, was suffered to hobble back to her hovel in the sand pit, without let or hinderance. It is true that Margery was most justly liable to the charge of imposture in the matter of Jock; and certain that, but for the easy and kind temper of the knight, and the good humour which her own quaint and jocular confession suddenly struck out of the wayward crowd, she might have been committed by Sir Oliver, or half drowned by the brutal and superstitious rustics on her road back to her miserable hovel. But as she lived at a lone spot on the far side of the Avon, and was not often seen in the parish of Milverton, and as the good knight (though by no means free from the prevalent belief in witchcraft, and still doubting whether under the form of a mouse she was not attended by an imp, as the witch-

finder had averred,) was a timid magistrate, hated trouble, and sincerely feared doing what was either wrong in law or severe in punishment, he rejoiced to be well quit of the troublesome appeal. Nevertheless, he was not a little secretly disturbed, when, late in the evening, old Philip—in a fear which had not even yielded to the comforting warmth of a cup of spiced ale—related to him his comical dream, with manifold exaggerations, and expressed his stout belief that he had been possessed during his sleep by the evil influence of old Margery.

Truth to say, at the period of which we write such was the fear and hatred of those forlorn and miserable old women, whose unsightly features, infirm gait, and cross tempers, excited among their neighbours any suspicion that they held intercourse with evil spirits, and exercised the powers of witchcraft, as drove forth the unhappy beings to lonely abodes in solitary places. Here again, in the vicinity of some villlage, remote from the scene of their persecution, their very loneliness, all compelled and oppressive as it was, did most naturally subject

them anew to the suspicions of fresh oppressors. So bloody, too, were the laws which at that time disgraced the statute book, having for their end the punishment of witchcraft, so cruel were the modes of trial among the mean and malignant persons who drove a lucrative trade as witch-finders, and so credulous was the ignorant and easily abused multitude, that, upon evidence far less colourable with guilt than that adduced against Margery, unfortunate persons of both sexes were publicly executed without shame and without pity. In numberless instances false confessions were extorted from the hopeless sufferers by torture, and adduced upon the day of trial, or proclaimed at the place of execution. Thus a rooted persuasion of the existence of sorcery and the practices of witchcraft was fixed in the minds of the vulgar, and even infected those of the better and the educated classes. As a natural consequence of this terrible superstition, some of the poor creatures suspected of witchcraft, who found themselves thrust out of the pale of human sympathy — avoided and shunned by some,

beaten and set upon by others — did madden, and mumble curses in their gloomy solitude, and at last began to suspect themselves as the servants of unseen spirits, and the partakers of a supernatural power.

In the breast of Cuthbert Noble the vulgar and cruel prejudice concerning witchcraft had no place. His humane and enlightened father had very early instilled into his mind clear notions of the love and care of the great Father of the human families; of the sacredness of human life, indeed of all life, and of the holiness of creation;—and he had, moreover, taught him to regard all particular cases of severe and inexplicable suffering as parts only of one vast and mysterious whole, and subserving, in the great end and issue, some wise, holy, wonderful purpose of divine and universal love. He had taught him, too, that ours was a marred and fallen nature; and how and by what means, and in whose divine person, it actually was restored; and how all the sons of Adam had become capable, through divine mercy, of partaking all the benefits of that restoration of

man's nature—in some degree even in this troubled and probationary state—in full and satisfying perfection in that state which is future and eternal. Hence, to the eye of Cuthbert, every one of human form was an object, though not perhaps of personal interest and affection, yet of wonder and of reverence, as a creature of God, born for immortality—an imperishable, an indestructible being; and, when the crimes and errors of his fellow-creatures stirred up his angry passions to punish and withstand them, the sense of his own weakness and his own sinfulness was ever waiting for him in his heart's closet, to rebuke and humble him in the calmness of solitude. But Cuthbert as yet had been little tried; he knew not what spirit he was of. He thought that his placid and firm father was the model which he surely followed; but the settled and peaceful joy of that amiable and benevolent and subdued father was as yet unknown to him.

However, the character and the life of Parson Noble will be the better understood and conceived of by transporting our reader to the vil-

lage in Somersetshire where he dwelt, and where, had it been her good fortune to have been a parishioner of his, old Margery, in spite of her wild and withered aspect, might have lived unmolested and in peace with her neighbours, and would not have lacked such acquaintance with the mercy of the great Redeemer, as it is in the power of a mere human instrument to impart.

CHAP. III.

A branch of May we have brought you,
And at your door it stands ;
It is but a sprout,
But it's well budded out,
By the work of our Lord's hands.

The hedges and trees they are so green,
As green as any leek ;
Our heavenly Father he watereth them,
With his heavenly dew so sweet.

From the Mayer's Song.

THE morning star glittered brightly above the fine old tower of Cheddar church, and the low parsonage lay still and asleep amid the flowers and the dewy grass plots of its pleasant garden, as advancing, from beneath the ancient yew in the churchyard, to the wicket opposite the good vicar's porch, a party of hale young rustics with coloured ribands in their hats and on their loose white sleeves, planted, on either side the entrance, a fine branch of white thorn

in full blossom, and struck up, with full and cheerful voices, the very ancient medley from which the stanzas at the head of our present chapter are taken. They had not sung two verses before the door of the parsonage was opened by a merry looking old serving man — two lasses' heads were thrust from a window over the kitchen — the mistress's good humoured eyes were seen over a white chamber blind, — and the parson himself, with a face as expressive of joy as a child's, though marked with the furrows of seven-and-sixty years, came forth to the wicket in a loose morning gown, with a black scull-cap on his silvery hairs, and listened, with a motion of the lips, that showed his voice, though not audible, and his kind heart were attuned to theirs, and to the coming holyday. When their song was done, he dismissed them with his blessing, with the customary gift of silver, and with a caution to keep their festival with gladness and innocence, and with the love of brothers; letting the poor and aged fare the better for it.

“And let us have no brawls on the ale bench,”

said the old parson, — “let our May-pole be the rod of peace; so that none may rail at our sports and dances, but rather take note of us as merry folk and honest neighbours.”

With loud thanks, and lively promises, and rude invocations of Heaven’s best gifts on him, and his lady, and his absent sons, the party now faced about, and with the accompaniment of pipe and tabor, and a couple of fiddles, moved off at a dancing pace to pay the like honours at the door of the chief franklin, and to deck the village street as they passed along.

Parson Noble now passed round to his favourite terrace walk, that overlooked a rich and extensive level, and taking up his lute, which lay in a little alcove at one end of it, he breathed out his morning hymn of thanksgiving, as was his wont, and thus composed, went into his study, and secluded himself for an hour from all interruption. At the close he again came into his garden, where he commonly laboured both for pleasure and health, every day of his life, in company with the attached old servant, who, for his quaint words and ways, had been

long known to the village by the name of plain Peter, — an epithet, which, as it gave him credit for blunt honesty, as well as for a cast in his eye, he readily pardoned, — nay, some said he was proud of it ; — for what manner of man is it that hath not a pride in something ?

“ Master,” said Peter, putting down his rake as the parson came up the walk, “ I have won a silver groat on your words this day.”

“ How so ? what dost thou mean, Peter ? ”

“ Why, last market day, when I was in the kitchen at the old Pack Horse at Axbridge, that vinegar-faced old hypocrite, Master Pynche, the staymaker, comes in, and asks me to bring out Betsy Blount’s new stays.

“ Says I, ‘ That I’ll do for Betsy’s sake, — a lass that hasn’t her better for a good heart, or a pretty face, in all Somersetshire.’

“ ‘ Verily, Master Peter, I think,’ said he, ‘ thy speech might have more respect to me, and more decency to the damsel, but thou savourest not of the things that be from above : — thou art of the earth, earthy.’

“ ‘Why, for the matter of things above,’ said I, ‘Master Pynche, I don’t pretend to any skill in moonshine ; and as to being of the earth, that I don’t deny, and thirsty earth too ; with that I put to my lips the cup of ale that I had in hand, and drank it down.’

“ ‘Is it not written,’ he replied in a snuffling tone, ‘that favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain ? — but thou art a servant of Beelzebub, and thou speakest the words of thy master, and his works wilt thou do.’

“ ‘In the name of plain Peter,’ I added, ‘herewith I proclaim you Prince of Fools, and I will send you a coloured coat, and a hood and bells, and thou shalt have a bauble, and a bladder of pease, and a licence to preach next April.’

“With that he lifted up his eyes and hands, and muttering something about pearls and swine, glided off like a ghost at cock crow.”

“Peter,” interrupted Noble, “thou shouldst not have said such things.”

“Marry, did he not call me a servant of Beelzebub ? the peevish old puritan ! — Well,

but to go on with my story. The folk in Dame Wattle's kitchen fell a discoursing after Pynche was gone; and some spake up after a fashion that made my hair stand up. Says a sturdy pedlar in the corner, — 'Ay, they'll soon be uppermost, and the sooner the better; rot 'em, I don't like 'em, the godly rogues; but they are better than parsons, any way.'

"So with that I felt my blood come up, and I was going to speak, when old Hardy, the cobbler, took up his words, and says he, 'That 's true of some, and it's true of our old Tossput; but there's Peter's master, of Cheddar, — you may search the country far and near before you will find his like. I remember when my niece Sally lay dying, night and day, fair weather and foul, he would trudge through mire or snow to give her medicine for body as well as soul, and that 's what I call a good parson.'

"'A good puritan,' said Dame Wattle. 'I have heard of his sayings and doings, and trust me, he'll go with your parliament men, your down-church men: you'll never have any more May-games and Christmas gambols at Cheddar.'

“ ‘There you ’re out, Dame,’ said I, ‘and don’t know any more about Master Noble than a child unborn.’

“ ‘A silver crown to a silver groat he ’ll give a long preachment against the May-pole next May-morning.’

“ ‘Done with you, Dame,’ said I.

“ ‘You may lay a golden angel to a penny there will be no May-poles at all, if you make it May twelvemonth,’ said the pedlar, ‘without, indeed, there be such as have pikes at the end of them;’ and with that he pulled out a printed paper, that he brought from London, and read out a long matter about the king and the bishops, and about church organs, and tithes, and play actors, and ship money, and Master Hampden; and made out, as plain as a pike staff, that there would be many a good buff coat and iron head piece taken down from the wall before long. ‘We shall have a civil war soon, and God defend the right,’ said he, as he folded up the paper and took up his pack.

“ ‘Civil,’ thought I, “that’s a queer word. I have heard talk of civil people and civil

speeches, but a civil blow from a battle-axe is a new thing. I'll tell master all about it when I get home, and axe what it means; — but as I was on the path in Nine Acres, whom should I meet but Master Blount, the young one, and he made me promise not to say a word to you before May-day was come, for fear the old sports might be hindered; and he told me that civil war meant war at home; for which I didn't think him much of a conjuror, as my guess had reached that far: and now, Master, prithee tell me what civil means."

"Peter, thou art an honest fellow, and as good a citizen as if thou knewest what it was called in Latin, and that a civil war was a war of citizens, but of a truth this is no matter for smiles; however, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' This is no morning for a cloudy face."

"Well, then, here comes one, and the worst that darkens our doors. For my part, I can't bide the sight of it, 't would turn all the milk in the dairy."

The vicar looked over his hedge, and saw the curate of a parish with whom he was but slightly acquainted, walking across the last close, which led by a footway into his orchard. The apple-trees concealed Noble from his approaching visiter, who, just as he reached the gate of the orchard, overtook a little boy, about nine years of age, carrying in his hand a cluster of cowslips half as big as himself, and having a thick crown of field flowers round his straw hat.

With a severe scowl, he snatched the cowslips from the frightened child, and threw them away, and then made a gripe at his little hat ; but, the boy drawing back with a blubbering cry, the zealous and tall curate, who had a little over-reached himself, slipped and fell prone upon the grass. This, however, was the lightest part of his misfortune; for it so chanced that his face came in full contact with a new-made rain-puddle, and he arose with his eyes half blinded, and his face covered and besmeared with mud. With the tears yet rolling down his red cheeks, the little fellow, as he saw himself

avenged in a measure so contenting, and a manner so ridiculous, ran out of his reach, literally shrieking with laughter ; and a hearty roar from old Peter at once completed his mortification, and determined his retreat. This soon became a maddened flight : for a sleeping dog roused by the noise of the laughter pursued him with angry barkings, from which, as he had no staff, and the grassy close could furnish no stone, there was no escape till the wearied animal paused and turned.

The whole of this scene was so very swiftly enacted, that Noble had no opportunity to say or do any thing in the matter ; and charity itself could not suppress a smile at a punishment so well suited to the morosity which had led to it. Neither was he at all sorry to be relieved upon this festal day from the intrusive visit of a sour, ill-instructed fanatic, whose opinions he could not value, and for whose character he felt no respect. He looked, therefore, with unmixed satisfaction at the laughing urchin, as he gathered up his scattered wealth, and departed.

Now merrily rang out the lively bells of

Cheddar Tower; and already was every street a green alley, freshened by thick boughs, and made fragrant by small branches of white thorn neatly interwoven.

The house of the chief franklin, Mr. Blount, was more especially honoured. Before his door was planted the largest and fairest branch of May that could be found in a circuit of five good miles, and his hospitable porch was made a rich bower of shrubs and flowers. Beneath the tall trees in front of it was a little crowd of youths and maidens, in holyday trim, wearing garlands, with green rushes and strewing herbs in their arms, or aprons: full they were of smiles and glee; and, out on the road, all the village was assembled, save the infirm old and the cradled young; though, of these last, not a few were borne in their mothers' arms, or lifted up with honest pride in those of their brown fathers, whose burning toils a field were, for this joyous day, forgotten.

From the words passing in these expectant groups, a stranger might soon have gathered that something more than the common sport of

May-day was engaging the honest and buzzing mob of men, women, and children, that blocked the street opposite this goodly mansion, and what that something was. "Better day better luck." — "A bonny bride is soon dressed." — "Honest men marry soon," said a black-eyed, nut-brown wife, with a lively babe in her arms, and two curly-headed little ones holding her apron, — and "Wise men not at all," added a gruff old blacksmith, with a seamed visage. — "Ah, it's no good kicking in fetters, Roger," rejoined the laughing wife, at the same time giving her infant into the horny hands of a stout young woodman, with a green doublet and a clean white collar, who held it up, kicking and shrieking with delight, as though it would spring out of his arms, and chimed in with "Ah, Master Roger, it's an ill house where the hen crows loudest." — "Ah, thou'lt find that some day, Stephen;" for this he got a heavy slap on his shoulder from the young wife, whose coming words were checked by the sound of fiddles, as the bridal procession came forth. "Dear heart," said she, "how pretty Bessy does look in that lilac gown."

with brave red guardings and the golden cawl on her fair hair, and what a beautiful lace rochet she has." — "Ah, fine feathers make fine birds," said a spinster standing near. — "He's a proper man is young Hargood, and should have known better than choose a wife by the eye." — "She had rather kiss than spin, I'll warrant." — "Better be half hanged than ill wed." — "You may know a fool by her finery." — "A precious stone should be well set," said the young wife, sharply, "and Bessy's blue eyes and her blushing cheeks are small matters to her ways and words." But envy and ill will were low-voiced, and confined to few, for old Blount and all his house were well loved by the people; and with many a word of cheerful greeting they made way for the party, and the most of them followed it to the church.

The procession was led by a few youths and maidens, with whom were all the musicians of the village; while others, walking immediately before the bride and her two bride maidens, strewed the ground, as they went, with rushes and herbs. The bridegroom, in a suit of violet-

coloured cloth, guarded with velvet of the deepest crimson, and with a falling collar of worked linen, followed, supported by his bridesmen, in fit bravery of apparel; next came a group of relations, male and female, led by the old franklin himself, with his grave and comely wife, and the men and maids of his household brought up the rear of the procession. It was met at the churchyard gate by Parson Noble and his wife, — she joining old Mrs. Blount, and the good vicar, in his snowy surplice, taking place at the head of it, immediately between the herb-strewers and the bridal party; and now a gravity and silence succeeded, and in decency and order all entered the church, and proceeded with quiet steps to the altar. There, the sweet and solemn service, which binds together for “better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do part,” was reverently and impressively performed by Noble, his own deep and mellow tones being only interrupted by the manly voice of the bridegroom, and the faltering accents of the shy and trembling bride, as they gave utterance to their

heart's true and hallowed responses. No sooner was the ceremony ended than the bells, which had, for a while, been silent, struck out with the wedding peal ; and as the new married couple came forth into the churchyard the air was rent with the joyous acclamations of the crowd without ; and the procession returned in nearly the same order as it had left the house of the worthy franklin, only, according to the good custom of the time, the parson made one of the wedding party, and partook of the marriage feast.

Such of the old as could not walk abroad, stood leaning on staves, or sat dim-eyed on the stones before their doors, to see or hear the bridal train pass down ; for each of these Parson Noble and the franklin had a kind word as they went by, returned by the benison and good wishes for the bride, who had herself no voice for any one, and, supported on her husband's arm, scarce saw her path through eyes that were filling from a happy bosom's overflow.

We shall not detain our reader by describing the dinner at Master Blount's ; right plentiful was the cheer. Parson Noble said a grace in

rhyme, out of old Tom Tusser's book of Husbandry, to the great contentment of his hospitable host, that being the one book by which, after his Bible, Blount squared his honest life.

“ God sendeth and giveth both mouth and the meat,
And blesseth us all with his benefits great ;
Then serve we the God, who so richly doth give,
Show love to our neighbours, and lay for to live.”

This being the franklin's rule, — while his guests were feasted in the old oak parlour, at the back of the house ; in the pleasant orchard, all his labourers were regaled with a hearty meal of meat and plum-porridge ; and huge jacks of ale were emptied and replenished, to the health of bride and bridegroom and good master.

After due carvings of veal and bacon, unlacing of fat capons, and untrussing of great pies of fruit and other dainties, in the parlour, and after some mantling cups of wine drank to the happy pair, the old people yielded to the impatience of the young, and all adjourned to Robin's Meadow, not, however, before they had sung, as the grace after meat, a short psalm of praise.

The meadow, in which from generations before the May-pole was raised, had a fine level sward, which Blount kept smooth as a bowling-ground for the dancers, while a part of it rose in swelling banks, shaded by trees. These, though, as yet, but in early leaf, were gaily green, and contrasted well with the many-coloured and blushing wreaths of field-flowers that wound about the May-pole, at the top of which glittered a small crown, newly gilded in honour of the wedding, and further adorned with a few of the rarest plants which the gardens of Cheddar could produce.

A pleasure it was, as they passed into the meadow, to see the happy children rolling and tumbling and racing down the steep bank, from which they now scrambled away, to make room for the franklin's party, and for the elders of the village, who, from this grassy knoll, were wont to preside over the pastimes of this holy-day. We give not this scene in detail:— the dances of the young, as, with light and elastic steps, they bounded to lively measures round the May-pole, and the nodding heads of the

musicians keeping time with the dancers, and the races and gambols of the ruddy children, each reader may figure forth to his own fancy. Neither tell we of the pretty ceremonies with which the milk maids brought their cows, with horns all garlanded, into the adjoining close, and prepared and offered the delicious syllabub: our aim is only to give an outline of a village May-day of the times of which we write, and to show the good parson of the best school of that period mingling in mirth among his people. Leaving, therefore, the happy villagers to continue their sports till set of sun, we shall confine ourselves to the steps of the pastor, and complete the journal of his day.

As the chimes struck six o'clock, he quietly withdrew, and passed from the scenes of pleasure and feasting to those of sickness and of mourning. If he had regarded the former with complacent joy, he was not the less willing, nor the less prepared, to cheer the latter with those high contemplations and those tender sympathies to which, by faith, as a Christian, he could point, and which, in charity, as a man, he truly

felt. Of the old, who were confined to their own thresholds, he found two or three cross and short, but most of them garrulous, and in good humour. They had got pleasant portions from the franklin, and they could tell of old May-days, and heard, with thankful nods and ready "ayes," and strong fetchings of the breath, that were not sighs of grief, the grave good words with which he taught them how only they could die in peace.

Of his flock only one lay at the point of death, and her he visited last.

She was the miller's daughter, and had been the May-queen of the bygone year. Sacred be such visit, in its most solemn communings! but we may paint the scene of it, and the trifles which belong to those sympathies of our humanity, that often survive the resigned hope of life.

In a tall chair, against the back of which she leaned her head, sate a pale maiden, warmly wrapped in a robe of white woollen, close to the small window of an upper chamber, on which the evening sun shone warm: curling honey-

suckles did make a frame to it; and one rose, with an opening bud, peeped from the trained bush beneath. Upon a little table near her stood a fragrant branch of May in a cup of water. There were faint flushes in her transparent cheeks, and there was an unearthly brightness in her eyes—not fitful—but a calm, steady, serene ray, that, as the declining sun poured over the damsel its yellow glories, presented her to the thoughtful gazer such as she might be when treading the celestial courts above.

“And have you any other wish, my child?” said Noble, as he rose to go.

“Yes, if it be not too foolish.”

“Tell it, my dear.”

“I would like some flowers from the May-pole strewn on my winding-sheet, and a bit of rosemary from your own garden put in my hands.”

“And you shall have them,” said Noble, pressing her wan hand in his, and turning quick away.

CHAP. IV.

And if physitions in their art did see
In each disease there was some sparke divine,
Much more let us the hand of God confesse
In all these sufferings of our guiltinesse.

A Treatie of Warres.

NIGHT closed on Cheddar, without any other disturbance than a quarrel — loud and short as a thunder-storm — between the blacksmith and his old termagant wife, which, Roger being potent in liquor, terminated in a complete victory on his part; and thus silence, if not peace, was restored to the quarter in which he dwelt.

Moreover, at the door of the Jolly Woodcutter, the most decent ale-house in the townlet, an old soldier with one leg, who tramped the country as a ballad-singer, with a fiddle and a dancing dog, became so very uproarious that it was found absolutely necessary by the parish constable to secure his one sturdy limb in the

village stocks, where, after venting a few loud and angry curses at this dignitary, and abusing the village fiddlers for not playing the grand march of the king's beef-eaters to the right tune, he addressed himself to making as easy a sleeping posture as his wooden fetter would allow; and, being apparently very familiar with such a resting-place, soon grumbled off into snoring forgetfulness: his little four-footed companion and guard did meanwhile drag up the cloak, which he had dropped some yards from the place of his confinement, and, arranging it in a soft heap, curled itself thereon with an evident sense of comfort.

But May-day festivals — though certainly in towns, and in those parishes in the rural districts where not conducted by discreet persons, they were often fruitful in scenes of riot and licentiousness — were not, in the present instance, chargeable with either of the noisy incidents which had for a half hour frightened the village from its propriety; seeing that the disputes of Roger and his rib were of every-day occurrence, and his potations also;

and as for the old soldier, his drinking bouts were regulated by the state of that narrow poke in which he deposited his uncertain gains; and his sobriety was never secure while one coin remained in it.

Our parson came forth at the first glimpse of day on the morrow, to inquire at the mill how the poor sufferer had passed the night. She was in a profound and calm sleep, and he returned thankfully home, taking the street which led by the market cross. Nobody was yet abroad; but, under the great tree in the market place, he saw the old soldier sitting up in the stocks, and looking about him very forlorn and penitential. No sooner did he perceive the good vicar approaching, than he began to plead for his freedom.

“ May it please your good reverence, make them loose me. I am not a pig, that I should be thus pounded: — never said or did harm to man or Christian, save only in the way of duty, your reverence. I am but a poor old toss-pike, done up in the wars; and gain an honest livelihood with this old kit and scraper, and this

dumb creature, that shall dance you jig or coranto with any city madam of them all."

"Why, I'll see what I can do; but you would not have been put here for nothing, friend."

"Nothing in life, your reverence, but drinking the health of King Charles in a brimmer, last evening, that was May-day, and a court holiday all the world over; and then the wound in my old head always aches, Parson, and I say more nor I mean, and, may be, louder than your gentles talk."

"Well, but this is a sorry way of life for an old soldier,—to go about like a vagabond. Have you no home?"

"Home, bless you! none but this old bit of a cloak."

"What parish were you born in?"

"Ah! there it is! I was born i' the camp, in the Low Countries. That same day that the most noble Sir Philip Sidney was killed, my mother had a fright from a shot striking the sutler's waggon, and I came into the world a month before time."

“And have you no friends living?”

“None in the wide world that care a split straw whether I am above ground or under, this blessed day, save, may be, this little dumb thing that’s used to me.”

• “Where did you lose your leg?”

“In the lines before St. Martin, your reverence: it will be thirteen years ago, come next September; and the right-worshipful knight, Sir Joseph Burroughs, was killed by the same shot. We used to say in hospital (you know, your reverence, we were vexed, and it was some of the officers, in their cups, spoke it out of a play-book,) —

“ ‘ Off with his head ! — So much for Buckingham.’ ”

Well, they had their wish, in a manner, a year after; and I always minded after, that Master Felton was one of them.—Poor fellow ! He gave me four-pence in silver, when I hadn’t a halfpenny to buy bread in London; and that same morning I saw his Grace of Buckingham in a sedan chair in Whitehall, and I would have tossed my staff before him, in

hope of a largess; but his running footmen, with their fine silver badges, shouldered me into the gutter, crying, ‘Room for his Grace! room for my Lord’s Grace!’ Well, it was little room he took or wanted that day was a month! I was very sorry for Master Felton, — and I went to see him hanged.”

“You know he was *a murderer*.”

“O yes, I know that; but he gave me fourpence when I was starving; and, though he was only a lieutenant, he was a better officer than Buckingham, who was all lace and velvet, satin and feathers:—a likely man to look upon, and did not want courage; but he knew no more about commanding an army than the court fool.”

“Don’t you know, friend, that you must one day die yourself; and that it is a terrible thing to die and go before God without preparation?”

The veteran gave his buff jerkin a twitch, and said, “Why, for the matter of that, Parson, you see, I am no scholar, and cannot tell a B from a bull’s foot.”

“You believe in God?”

“ Why, Master, haven’t I lain half my life abroad in the open fields, with the stars shining over my head? Ah, you don’t know what grand things come into a poor fellow’s mind when he wakes in the night and sees them bright things above him.”

“ Yes, but I do,” said Noble with emotion ; “ and it is because I do, that I ask you these things. Do you ever pray to God?”

“ Why, bless you, Master, I wouldn’t trouble him about a poor chopstick like myself.”

“ You know the name of Christ, friend?”

“ Yes,” said the homeless wanderer, and bowed his grey head.

“ And what are your thoughts of him?”

“ Why that he’ll be so good as to speak a word to God Almighty for me,” was the man’s strange yet pregnant answer. It is this mixture of recklessness, ignorance, and the mysterious worship of that inner spirit, which struggles upwards after something to which the heart may reach, and where it may finally rest, that makes every human being a subject of sad yet of sublime contemplation ;— a fellow, a brother,

an immortal spirit, passing here below his brief time of sojourning, but born for eternity.

Our good vicar was a true messenger of peace : — we need not say more than that this and all such opportunities were gladly improved by him. He sowed beside all waters. In the present instance the old soldier was speedily released, and taken up to the parsonage, and there, in the shady porch, he had a hearty breakfast ; and when the little household assembled for prayer the wondering wayfarer was brought into the hall, and heard the more excellent way very plainly set before him,—and was then suffered to depart with bread in his wallet, and a parting word of solemn warning and brotherly kindness, as he set forward on his path, carrying with him the new thought and feeling, that, though he was a ballad singer and a sot, accustomed only to revilings, he had found a man of God, who had not passed him by, but had served him, and soothed him, and cared for his soul.

Such a man and such a minister was our parson of Cheddar : he had been now resident

in the parish for fifteen years. Hither he had then brought a sensible wife,—of many rare accomplishments, and of a solid piety. Three fine children then played in their garden: of these, their girl had been taken from them in her twelfth year; and their two boys, who had both attained the age of manhood, had quitted the paternal roof, and taken their respective paths in life. Cuthbert, the eldest, had been educated at Winchester College, had afterwards passed through his university course at Cambridge, and was now domiciled, as has been already seen, in the house of Sir Oliver Heywood, as a tutor.

Martin, the youngest, had been five years at Westminster School as a day scholar, under the care, during that period, of one Mr. Philips, a worshipful and wealthy gentleman, of the most honourable company of Goldsmiths, and brother to the late Sir John Philips, knight, a very eminent merchant in the Levant trade, who, having made an unsuccessful speculation, and losing his whole venture, had taken the failure of his fortunes so much to heart,

that he sickened and died soon after, leaving behind him one portionless daughter. This girl, while under the roof of her uncle, who was very considerably the junior of her father in age, was seen and admired by Noble, and had soon become his welcome prize.

With this maternal uncle, Martin, at his own request, was placed, as soon as he quitted school, that he might be brought up in the same thriving business. He quickly became remarkable for his taste and skill in the art of design, and as a fine judge of precious stones, so that his uncle predicted for him great eminence and wealth in the line which he had chosen; but Martin chancing one day to wait upon Vandyck with an ornamental piece of plate which a nobleman presented to that great genius, and being questioned about the design, confessed, with some hesitation, that it was his own. Hereupon the painter broke out into praise so warm, and took such notice of the youth, that, to Martin, a painter did soon seem the highest style of man; — to be of this bright company was now the highest object of his am-

bition. He had a strong will ; for this he rose early, and late took rest : and the bent of his inclination became so decided, and his promise of excellence so great, that his uncle, at the recommendation of Vandyck, determined to afford him the opportunity and advantage of visiting Italy, and pursuing his studies in the city of Rome. There, surrounded by the great models of the divine art to which he was devoted, daily extending his knowledge, and increasing his delight, Martin lived at once to labour and to enjoy.

But the absence of these dear boys, though necessary, was severely felt by Noble and his wife ; nor, in those days, were communications by letter of regular or frequent occurrence, even at home,—and of course, from abroad, very rare and most uncertain.

The good vicar, though anxious about Martin's residence at Rome, was not wanting in true sympathy for his pursuits ; having himself a taste for the arts, which he had improved by a leisure tour through Italy (before his marriage)

as tutor and guardian to a young gentleman of large possessions in Oxfordshire.

Nothing could be more retired than the life led by these childless parents at Cheddar.

It is a large village, or townlet, situate at the foot of the Mendip Hills, in Somersetshire, and lying pleasantly sheltered on the south-west side of that bleak and naked chain. The noble tower of its fine old church is richly adorned with double buttresses, pinnacles, and pierced parapets, and in the open space, which forms the centre of its few irregular streets, is an ancient hexagonal market cross, where the wayfarer may find a shelter from the hot suns of July, or from the heavy rains of winter. The neighbourhood of Cheddar is romantic: it commands a fine view, in one direction, over a rich and extensive level; and it is immediately surrounded by rich, well-watered pastures, always verdant. Within a mile of the market cross before mentioned, on the road to Wells, there is a narrow, but a stupendous pass, or chasm, by which the chain of the lofty hills of Mendip is cleft, as it were, in sunder. The

road winds through the bottom of this strange defile; the cliffs rise on either side — ragged, scarped, and terrific in their aspect — presenting, in many places, a sheer fall of four hundred feet. Nothing can more sublimely impress the spirit of a lonely traveller than the passage of this wild ravine, on a day of cloud, and gloom, and rushing winds. In the sunny calm of summer, when the wild pink, springing from the crevices of the rocks, adorns the scene with something of gentleness, it is still of uncommon grandeur. Black yews project from the larger fissures: here is a narrow ledge covered with verdure; there a thick mantle of ivy clothes the summit: here the mountain ash slants forward in its fantastic growth; while yet, in many places, the craggy front is naked and dazzling as a wall of stone.

By this road, once a week, the quiet parson ambled on an old grey horse to the fair city of Wells to refresh and recreate his spirit at a private music meeting in the Close; nor did he ever omit on these occasions to pass one hour of joy and praise in its magnificent cathedral.

Upon the breezy summits of the Mendip hills, which bordered this road, he spent many serene and healthful hours. His life was most even in its tenour; and the scenes around him, though daily before his eyes, were as dear to him, or more so, than when, first entering on residence, he had surveyed them with grateful rapture.

Villages, however, like kingdoms, have their revolutions; and the chronicles of them are preserved in chimney-corners with more or less of fidelity, according to the interest of the events and the worth of the characters who figured in them.

These rustic historians have a mode of reckoning very different from citizens. With prime ministers they have nought to do. Their government is nearer to them, and they have never wanted wit enough to know when that was good or evil. Over these rural communities the ruler has, from time immemorial, been the lord of the manor, or the chief franklin, or the parson of the parish. According as these personages were disposed to promote religion and happiness, or to look with indifference on vice

and misery, the rustic population was contented and cheerful, (because industrious in their callings, and peaceable in their lives,) or they were sullen and profligate. Under the joint reign of Franklin Blount and Parson Noble the inhabitants of Cheddar had long dwelt together in comfort and harmony; but this is a world of change,—and many things in the aspect of public affairs, of which the villagers heard and heeded little, gave serious warning to the prescient mind of Noble, that trouble was near.

He was so beloved and respected by his people, and so regarded and confided in by the worthy franklin, that he had hitherto been able to evade, counteract, or over-rule, for the good of his flock, those strange enactments which had been from time to time so inconsiderately imposed. That which enjoined him to *publish* the Book of Sports on the Sabbath-day he totally disregarded. On this point he would have consented to deprivation rather than obey. Hence he became suspected, by some parsons of a very different stamp, for a puritan; and there were not wanting uncharitable surmises among these con-

cerning the course which Master Noble would take in the hour of trial; not that those who really knew him well ever doubted of that course at all.

But while these surmises were, as regarded himself, utterly devoid of foundation, it was asserted by some of his friends at Wells, the correctness of whose judgments and the charity of whose sentiments well accorded with his own, that his son Cuthbert had imbibed, from his late associates at Cambridge, a spirit of a very dangerous nature. Cuthbert had a large philanthropy, and a resolute courage to sustain and act out those promptings of benevolence which his love of freedom was continually urging upon his mind. Virtuous in his character, sanguine in his hopes, present evils he saw, and for present remedies he panted — but he looked not far on to consequences. A notion of his state of mind may be found in the letter which follows : —

“ Most dear Father,

“ You tell me in your last letter, which I have read over many times with serious thought,

that my mother wishes me to send her a more particular account of this place and family, that she may the better see my present courses with the eye of her mind. — I will make a trial of my pen to set these matters in some order before her — and, first, of this mansion : it is a goodly fabric of stone, built by the father of the present knight in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He, as you know, exchanged some of his full money-bags for a fair estate in land, and closed all his great and prosperous ventures in commerce by a wise retirement to the noble pleasures of a country life. A situation more pleasant than this of Milverton you may not see in all the journey through these parts. The house standeth on a fine swelling slope of verdant ground, and is well sheltered by stately trees on three sides, but to the front the prospect is open, and maketh the heart dance with gladness, it is so full of delight. Looking to the south, you see the towers of that famous castle of Guy of Warwick. This castle is seated on a rock, very high, upon the river Avon, and hath a look of strength and of great majesty; as

seen against the light of the distant sky — nothing can be more grand and commanding ; — also, from the middle of the good city of Warwick, the fair pinnacles of the lofty tower of St. Mary's Church do pierce the heaven, and she standeth like a crowned queen. I do fear for her diadem, for they say that the embattled keep of ancient Guy frowneth on our lady : but, turning the eyes from these stately objects, which the intervening woods may not conceal, directly below Milverton the river flows through a fair valley of green pastures ; and there cannot be, in all England, a mill more pleasant to look upon and listen to than Guy's mill : it standeth upon the farther bank of the Avon, over which there is a foot-bridge of wood, very narrow, and long enough to reach across a small meadow, which, when the waters are out, is always flooded. Not far from this mill, to the left, and upon the same bank, is an old decayed chapel, where I have seen a rude statue of the renowned Guy, more than eight feet in length ; and near to this spot, close by the side of the water, there is a cave in the rock, where, as a hermit, he

ended his days. But I will say no more of these places, of which report may have reached you through the discourse of others.

“Milverton House lacks nothing of furniture that money and good taste may command. There is a profusion of very fine carved oak in the hall and in the winter-parlour. In the latter, over the fire-place, is a curious representation of the meeting of Jacob and Esau; and inscribed above are the words, ‘With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.’ And in the private chamber of Sir Oliver is another piece, in three compartments, Jacob lying down alone in the Wilderness — the Vision of the Ladder of Angels — and Jacob setting up his Pillar of Remembrance.

“I name these things rather than the rich hangings and the handsome carpets which cover some of the tables, and the ebony cabinets, and the massy plate, because I know that they would give more contentment to my pious mother than all the costliness and bravery in the king’s palace.

“In the small room appointed for me, there is a posy worked upon a sampler, hung against the wall, that runneth thus : —

“What better bed than conscience good, to pass the night
with sleep ;

What better work than daily care, from sin thyself to keep.”

And there is an engraved portrait of Luther, with the words ‘In silentio et in spe erit fortitudo vestra.’ I cannot look upon these things without being deeply reminded of those feeling lectures of piety which the lips of my dear mother have read to me from my very childhood ; but, truth to say, my dear parents, I feel an angel plucking me by the sleeve, and whispering in my ear that my stay in this sweet abode will not be long. Sir Oliver and Mistress Alice and Mistress Katharine entreat me with that kind civility and favourable respect, which make my days happy, and I find Master Arthur so docile and of such lively parts that my office is never irksome.

“Nothing can be more orderly than the manner of life here ; and although the good knight

is most hospitable, yet, as he doth not use the exercise of hunting, and has no park, the visiters are not many. He rides daily in the forenoon, and will sometimes go to see the stag-hounds of Stoneleigh Abbey throw off, with which pack he hunted for twenty years; but his chief delight now is in the culture of his garden and orchards, and of a vineyard, which he has laid out, at a great cost, on a favourable site, one mile from the mansion. All the farms in the village of Milverton are his, and his tenants are the sons of those who held the land under his father; so that the hamlet is but one large family, of which Sir Oliver is the head.

“Mistress Katharine, his daughter, rides constantly with her father, except when she takes the diversion of hawking, or goes out after the beagles with her young cousin, Arthur, who is as high-spirited and active a youth in the field, as he is earnest and persevering in the study. To see Mistress Katharine fly a hawk is glad-some; and although I have, from boyhood, accounted that sport cruel and unfeminine, yet, when I look on that inspiring sight, I deem it

so no longer; certain I am that her mind did never once connect the thought of cruelty with a usage so common. She, too, seems as eager to learn what my poor scholarship can teach her as my own pupil; and if a tutor can be happy, I am, in the privilege of reading with this noble maiden, and seeing her fine countenance lighted up with the love of wisdom and of truth.

“But this state of things is far too bright to last. When a man dareth to think differently from those around him, he will soon become an object of suspicion and prejudice. I feel that my trial in this kind will assuredly come; for Sir Oliver, with all his kindness, has so rooted a dislike to all change in the established order of things, that a word against the undue stretch of the king’s authority, against the tyranny of the starchamber, or those abuses in the state, which are manifest to her best friends, would be enough to make his countenance change towards me past recovery.

“Upon these subjects, you, my dear father, have written to me with more earnestness and

fear than I should have looked for. You tell me that I see not the inevitable consequences which must follow from the acting out of those opinions and sentiments with which I am so captivated. I confess that I am an ardent friend to civil and religious liberty. I desire to see the laws administered without fear or favour; to see taxation imposed by the Commons alone, and to see purity and charity preaching from our pulpits and ministering at our altars. You must not blame me: these were the desires that you implanted, when you taught me the immutable and eternal principles of justice, and when, both by lip and in your life, you showed me how sacred was the character, and how hallowed were the duties, of an ambassador for Christ. I look for reformation in the state, and purification of the church. You, perhaps, despair of either; and therefore you dread an ill result to the patriotic and pure efforts which so many great and good men are now making. Some of the best and wisest of my college friends think with them. Of that number are my late tutor and my late chamber-fellow, with both of whom

you expressed yourself so much delighted, when, during my last year of residence, you visited Cambridge. I confess, frankly, that I hold their sentiments, and entertain hopes of ultimate good to my country as sanguine as theirs. The cause of liberty must triumph.

“Your last letter gave but little hope of poor Fanny at the mill: what a fair, cheerful, good girl she was. Martin will be very sorry when he hears about her: if you remember, he was always for dancing with Fanny on May-day.

“I am glad to hear that Bessy Blount is going to be married. She will make Tom Hargood’s farm as happy a home as any in England. However, I will not talk about weddings, —the very word makes me melancholy. I am just now preparing a short masque, which we are to perform next week, in honour of Sir Oliver’s birth-day. I suppose Martin, as well as myself, has very different notions of female beauty now to any we gathered at Cheddar; though, I doubt, if we shall either of us become the happier for our knowledge. Rosy cheeks and laughing eyes are joyous and pleasant to look upon,

but they seldom beget cureless heart-aches, or plant the long-lived sorrow:—all this is very idle. The love of country is the next best love to that of God, and, after that, the most rewarding.

“I suppose that you will soon have a letter from Rome: no doubt Martin is very happy among the galleries and studios of that ancient city. I often wish that I could be transported there for an hour, and see him, as he stands alone, before a master-piece of Raphael, and sighs for the very fulness of his admiration. Forget not to let me hear the earliest news of Martin. I shall think of you all on May-day at old Blount’s; but, as the good old country customs are kept up here with great spirit, shall have no leisure to grieve over my absence from Cheddar, till night restores me to the solitude of my chamber, and to that sacred companionship with you in prayer, which I ever maintain.

“Your dutiful and loving son,

“CUTHBERT NOBLE.

“*Milverton, April 20. 1640.*”

CHAP. V.

Now winde they a recheat, the roused deer's knell,
And through the forrest all the beasts are aw'd ;
Alarm'd by Eccho, Nature's sentinel,
Which shows that murd'rous man is come abroad.
Gondibert.

EARLY in the morning of the day after that on which the rehearsal at Milverton House was interrupted by the humiliating scene already recorded, Cuthbert sallied forth, while the first rays of the level sun were reflected back by glittering dewdrops ; and brushing them with swift steps from his path, crossed the foot-bridge near Guy's mill, and was soon lost to view in the woods upon the far side of the Avon. The mill was already at work, but he lingered not to gaze upon the rushing waters. His eye glanced at the glad scene, and his ear drank in the living sound ; but the prosy old miller was at his door, and his daughter stood on the stepping stones

below, watching the white breasted ducks that played in the back current, therefore, with a short "good morrow," that waited for no reply, he passed onwards, for he was bound on an errand of mercy. Although the old body, Margery, had escaped the persecution of yesterday, there was good ground for fearing that it would be soon and more cruelly repeated, if she continued to dwell in her lonely and exposed hovel; and Cuthbert had found a poor bricklayer from Coventry, who was then employed in repairing the roof of an outhouse at Milverton, and who had witnessed the scene of the day before with a true Christian feeling, quite willing to give the old woman a lodging in the small house in the mean alley in which he dwelt, for such consideration as Cuthbert was willing to pay. With this proposal of shelter and security he sought the wood, in the bosom of which, beneath a sand-stone rock, in a forsaken pit, was poor Margery's desolate abode. From the rude clay chimney, in the blackened thatch, curled a blue wreath of smoke: he leaned against the rock above, and called to Margery, but there was no

reply. He went down and entered the hut. Upon a low stretcher on a coarsely plaited mat of straw, dressed in the same rags in which she walked abroad, she lay fast asleep, and her breathing sounded soft as that of a child,—a raven with a clipped wing and club-foot hopped upon the floor, and croaked at the intrusion; but the sound, though loud, did not awaken her. “I will not fright away a sleep so friendly,” thought Cuthbert: he went forth again, and seated himself beneath a stately oak at no great distance. In an open grassy glade not far off, in front, a few deer were feeding,—the scene around was peace and beauty,—trees, herbs, beasts of the field and fowls of the air were declaring the glory and praising the goodness of a present God. In silent rapture Cuthbert mused his praise; but adoration was succeeded by a sense of pain,—another scene, another image, interposed between the sunny objects before him and his mental vision. The stony desolation of Mount Calvary, and the black sky above, and the pale and holy forehead with its crown of thorns, came up startling and apparent, and re-

minded him that he was the inhabitant of a fallen world. This solemn turn being given to his thoughts, his mind reverted, with serious consideration, to the views of that party in the state which was already designated by the name of Puritans, and which had been hitherto, and but for the questions of civil liberty now widely agitated would still have been, a by-word and a reproach among the people. "It is true," said he, "a Christian must be a mourner—he cannot be other than a mourner; but yet, are we not graciously commanded to serve the Lord with gladness? is the countenance always to be sad? is there to be no rejoicing in the light of the sun? Where is the middle ground between these two great parties in church and state? Why is not a great and overwhelming majority of moderate men found there to defend the best interests of all?" The thoughts to which he thus gave utterance would have found a response in the bosoms of thousands—indeed they were the very sentiments of his own father; only that good man knew, what Cuthbert was as yet ignorant of,—a knowledge which he was soon

to purchase at the heavy price of a most bitter and heart-breaking experience. He had yet to learn that, in times of public commotion, there is no middle path, and that a party does too often take the colour of the very worst persons among those who compose it. The cant of the fanatic and the curses of the cavaliers alike disgusted him. But yet he was of an age when men will be sanguine about having the world mended according to their desired pattern; and his heart glowed with the hope that the best men of the parliament side would in the end triumph over the cold and severe intolerance of the high church party, would control the power of the crown, and would effect great and glorious things for the liberty and the happiness of England. With these sentiments he had a very difficult card to play at Milverton, for Sir Oliver was a decided enemy to the party which he secretly approved; and some of the neighbouring gentlemen, holding the same opinions with the knight, gave a much coarser expression to them. He had to hold his mouth as with a bridle in their presence. Among these persons

by far the most obnoxious was Sir Charles Lambert, a gentleman of about five-and-thirty, related to Sir Oliver, and residing within a few miles, at Bolton Grange, upon a fine property, with two younger sisters left dependent on him.

He had been a great deal about the court formerly, and in his youth had been attached, for a few years, to the retinue of the late Duke of Buckingham. Not proving of a capacity for public affairs, he had been thrown back upon country life, without the true refinements of a courtier, but with all those vices and fopperies, which, in the train of Buckingham, it was not difficult to acquire. He covered with satin and musk a heart as brutal and savage as one of his own hounds,—resembling in nothing that generous and warm race of men the country gentlemen of England but in a fine person and in a passion for the chase. Nevertheless he did so conceal from Sir Oliver his true character, that he was always made welcome at Milverton. In such thoughts the mind of Cuthbert was tossed about as on a troubled sea; and from mere weariness he fell into a contemplation of the sweetness

of nature, and the soft manner of her nursing, when we lie still and passive in her lap, and look upon her face. So long a time had he lingered in this green haunt, that the sun was three hours high; and the great clock of Warwick, striking seven, warned him to return home. Of the small herd in the open glade a few were still grazing,—others, and a noble hart among them, lay in perfect repose: but, suddenly, every neck was raised and turned—the ears stood erect—the nostrils distended and closed—the eyes dilated—and then, as by accord, they all stole slowly off to the rocky and difficult ground above them. He looked around, and could see nothing to alarm them; but, in the same instant, the blast of a distant hunting horn came up faint on the wind: the sound was again heard nearer; and the loud voice of dogs in concert, shrill yet deep, made the woods echo with notes that silenced every bird, and drove away all the panting creatures from their lairs. Yet was it a gallant sight—a sight to stir the blood—as within some twenty yards of the tree under which Cuthbert stood, the chase

in full career swept by:—with antlers well thrown back, in its last staggering speed, came a blown stag, with a stanch hound so close upon its flank, you looked to see the fine creature torn down instantly; not far behind, two leash of dogs were hanging on its track, their mouths loud opening for prey:—with shouts of joy, and pace precipitate, the huntsmen followed,—a small but eager band on gallant steeds all foaming at the mouth, and stained with sweat. Swift as a vision of the night they passed, and from beyond a swell of ground in front a winding horn sent forth the well known mort. Cuthbert, naturally excited, ran to a knoll before him, which might command the country beyond. On the side of an open slope, at some considerable distance, he saw the last act of the death. The lifted knife, all red and reeking, was in the hand of a stranger of noble presence, by whose side stood Sir Charles Lambert. The lordly game lay stretched upon the ground, and near, with lolling tongues and panting sides, the hounds lay gasping as for life. The riders were all dismounted, and their horses,

with drooping heads and their hind quarters sunk and contracted, stood stiff and motionless beside them. By the loud and exulting voices of the sportsmen you might know that the run had been severe; two or three lagging horsemen were seen coming up in their track; and by a cross path, just above the spot where the stag was killed, two foresters on foot burst down at the top of their speed, and joined the group that now more closely surrounded the noble game. The sound had brought out all the household at Milverton, from whence the slope was plainly to be seen. The boy Arthur, with some of the serving-men, ran down the pathway towards Guy's mill, while Cuthbert could discern Sir Oliver standing out on the terrace, and Mistress Katharine by his side, with a loose white kerchief thrown over her head, to keep off the rays of the sun, which were already powerful.

The hunters now sounded the relief, and waved their caps towards Milverton; intimating, by that note and action, that they would claim the hospitality of the mansion; and then, leading their tired horses by the bridle, they

proceeded thither by the mill. Cuthbert, unseen himself, watched all their motions; and when they had disappeared within the gates of Milverton, and all below and around him was again still, he turned, with a dead and jaded interest, towards the sand-pit. Upon the edge of it, near the rock, he saw the bent figure of Margery, as if in the act of listening; and as she raised her head, and observed him walking to the spot, she hastily disappeared below.

He stepped quickly after her; but the door was already barred; and when he knocked and called to her, the hoarse croak of the raven was the sole reply. He rapped more loudly, — still the same voice of ill omen replied; but as he persisted, and said words to re-assure her, the door was slowly opened, and the withered tenant of the pit appeared.

“Is it you, young master?” said Margery; “and are you alone, and is there no hunter with you?”

“There is no one with me,” he replied: “the hunters have gone over the river.”

“That’s well, that’s well, master: a hunt-

ing day, if the game takes this way, is ever an ill day with me. They that be cowards alone, are bold in merry company; and I have had a whip on my old shoulders, and the dogs hounded on me before now, if any thing crossed their sport. Three years ago, last fall, when his best hound, Bevis, was killed in the hollow yonder, nothing would serve the turn of Sir Charles but to float my poor old carcass across the river, and to weigh me against the church Bible ! But he hath had many a sleepless night for that ; and bold as he looks by day, the ticking of a death-watch will keep him shivering in his bed."

"What do you mean, Margery? The folk may well think you a witch for words such as these."

"Why, I mean," said the old woman wilfully and spitefully, "that I never wished ill to any one, but ill came upon 'em."

"Had I thought this of you yesterday, I should have been slow to ask any one to give you house room ; but you are God's creature, and have been crossed with ill usage ; and when

you find yourself beneath the roof of a Christian, safe from all enemies, your heart will melt, and you will taste God's peace yourself, and wish it to others. I have found a good man, that lives in Croft's Alley in Coventry, and he will give you a chamber and a chimney corner, and kind words, and a stout arm to protect you; and when we get you safe there your thoughts will be quiet."

"Hout-tout! what talk ye about Alley and a chimney corner? haven't I my own ingle, and my own ways, and my own company? What voice more pleasant to me than those I heard when I was young, and hear still? What'll take better care of me than that old bird? Few there be that don't shun to pass close by this hut; and they that come to it step swiftly back again. I was told, with a curse, that I might not live any where else, many years ago; and here I shall stop till my old bones crumble."

"Why, mother, why, you might starve here if you were taken ill, and none to help you."

“ Well, death is but death, let it come how it will.”

“ But hunger is a bad death ; and besides, are you not in constant danger of being taken up, and losing your life for a witch ? Why, this bird that you keep, and your words and ways, will surely bring you to the stake one of these days.”

“ Let the day come, if it is to come ; and as to dying of hunger, where, think you, do the foxes die ? and where do the birds of the air die ? Why, they that escape the hounds die in their holes ; and they that the bird-bolt misses find a dying place in some nest or corner. Go your way, young master ! I am no tame rabbit, to be kept in a town hutch, and tormented by children. I don't want to be led to church, and hear the parson's jabber about my old soul.”

“ Do not utter such wickedness, unhappy woman. It were charity to think you crazed, and take you into safe keeping against your will.”

At this the old woman gave a shriek of passion, fitful as that of a thwarted child, and then, suddenly overcome by fear, fell upon her aged knees, and lifted and joined her withered hands, and implored Cuthbert, with wild earnestness, never to have her moved.

“ Look you, young master, winter and summer, here I have watched and waked these many years. It’s a small matter of meal that makes my porridge ; — some give it for pity, and some give it for fear. There’s no lack of rotten sticks to keep me warm : yonder spring is never dry ; and it’s free I am to go and to come, and nothing here to flout or to fret me : the deer and the kine take no count of me — the pretty creatures don’t fear me ; and it’s not all the world calling me witch that will make them. That place is best we think best. Oh, for the love of God, master, let me alone — let me rot where I am.”

Cuthbert’s mind was in an agony of prayer ; but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. He would have said much ; but he could speak

nothing. He gave her alms; and telling her that he would do nothing against her will — nothing to make her unhappy, but that he would come and see her again — he raised her from her knees, and went upon his way homewards.

“ My father would not thus have left her,” was his first thought. “ He would have found some way to break into her heart. Strange world — strange thing this human life ! This old solitary miserable has been wrapped in swaddling clothes, even as others — has been suckled at a human breast — has grasped, with tiny hand, a father’s finger — and been kissed, and muched; and now, she has survived all kindred — lost all defence of strength or money — hath none of wisdom, and because her back is crooked, and nose and chin have come well nigh together, she has been hunted from her kind, and dwells apart. As God is love, — and that he is I cannot doubt and live, — this is a mystery ! It’s a skein so much entangled that my poor wit can not unwind it.”

Muttering to himself these wayward fancies, he hurried back to Milverton as to his heart's home. There he could see sunlight upon the earth, and feel warm in the comfort of it. Nor in his then mood was he sorry that the guest chambers would be full: he wished a day of cheerful cups, and pleasant voices, and music. Thus absorbed, he reached the mill, and passed it as swiftly as in the morning.

"There he goes," said the old miller, speaking to his daughter, who was spreading out some linen to bleach — "There he goes, as shy as a hare, and as fast as if he were making for his form. I never gets a bit of chat with him. He's not much for company."

"Why, father," replied the girl, coming upon the pathway, "he's a scholar, you know, and that's the fashion of them, you know."

"Well, it's a bad fashion to go poking about the woods as lonesome as a stray mule; no good comes of those crazy fashions. I like an open face, and an open hand, and a free tongue."

"Eh! he can talk fast enough, I'll warrant me, if he had a sweetheart to talk to."



“ He talk to a sweetheart ! She must be a poor silly body that would listen. There are merry men and merry hearts enough in old England for the lasses to choose from, without giving ear to such as he.”

“ Well, they give him kind words at the Hall, —and they say he’s always more for good than harm ; and I find him pleasant spoken enough when he comes to angle in the mill-pool.”

“ There it is ! I can never make him say a dozen words, black or white ; now Parson Mullins will chat free for an hour on, and tosses you off a pot of ale with good words and good will. Why, he and I have smoked many a pipe together ; and he’s a clerk, and a rare scholar too. He doesn’t give you ignorant stuff o’ Sundays ; but Latin, and Greek, and all the best that he has learned at college. That’s the man for my money.”

“ Well, father, for the matter o’ that, I like to know what folk are saying ; and it might be gipsy language for all you or I are the wiser.”

“I know where you got that lesson, Miss Pert; that’s what the old Puritan pedlar said the other day, — rot him ! he shall take seat on the old wive’s ducking-stool if he comes this way again.”

“I am sure he was a quiet civil man ; and you have not had a better piece of linen, or a cheaper, than he sold us, this many a year.”

“Hang his linen, and him too !” rejoined the sturdy old miller. “I didn’t like the cut of his black head ;” and with that he passed into the mill, and the girl went towards the dwelling.

While this dialogue was passing, Cuthbert Noble was rapidly ascending the path, which rose gently over a swelling field of luxuriant grass, to Milverton. Certainly there was much about Cuthbert to excuse the prejudice of the miller. He was of low stature, with a long visage and grave aspect ; and there was a peculiar expression of his eye, which disturbed or repelled those who saw him for a first time, or who saw him not at his ease ; but to those whom, upon a nearer ac-

quaintance, he liked, his dark eye beamed with light; the expression about his mouth was humane and gentle; his voice was low, and rather tremulous before strangers; he never laughed, and seldom smiled, save with his eyes, which gave quick and lively response to whatever pleased him. Though, in his first manhood, he was not without a knowledge of life and of the human heart, for his reading had been extensive; and he had that felicity of apprehension, by which the lessons of books are most happily caught, and most easily applied to the heart's daily wants. Moreover, he had all those graces of persuasion by which a pupil is best won upon and encouraged to climb the steep hill of fame. More happily placed he could not have been than in the family of Sir Oliver Heywood, but for one circumstance — he was too happy. A fear lay beating in his bosom. He dared not confess to himself the strange, yet deep, sentiments of admiration with which he regarded the daughter of the worthy knight. He would fain persuade himself that it was nothing but an emo-

tion of gratitude to Mistress Katharine for that generous courtesy which would not suffer a scholar of gentle birth to want such attention and respect as she might delicately pay to him. Here, however, his wisdom was at fault. In vain had books taught him the misery of misplaced affections. He was launching out upon an unknown sea that has no shore.

CHAP. VI.

Some snakes must hiss, because they 're born with stings.

THE table in Milverton Hall was already surrounded by the hungry guests ; and a substantial old English breakfast, well suited to the appetites and the digestion of active and manly hunters, was spread before them. They were so busied over the cold joints and the venison pasties, or with the amber ale that foamed in silver tankards, as scarcely to notice the entrance of a late comer, and therefore Cuthbert slipped into a vacant place at the bottom of the table, without other greeting than the good-humoured nod of a ruddy-looking young parson seated opposite, as he raised a tankard to his lips. There was little talk, save a few words about the sport, until having fairly finished their meal, the chairs were backed a little from the huge oaken table ; the serving

men lifted off the large dishes, still weighty with good fare, removed the trenchers, and having carried round the basin and ewer, large silver cups, filled with canary wine, prepared, after the fashion of the time, with sugar and with certain herbs, so as to make a delicious beverage in warm weather, were placed upon the table. The short grace "Benedicto benedicatur" having been uttered by George Juxon, the youthful rector alluded to, Sir Oliver took the massive cup which stood before himself, and intimating to Juxon to follow his example with the other, he rose, and giving for a toast, "His most gracious Majesty King Charles," took a small draught of it, and passed the cup to the noble looking gentleman who had been sitting on his right hand, and was then standing by his side. The toast passed round with an audible "God bless him !" from every guest, after the example of the loyal host.

"Ah, Sir Philip," observed the worthy knight to the noble stranger near him, "we have fallen upon evil times ; and it is grievous to think that there should be one house in all England where the health of his most sacred Majesty may no

longer be duly drunk, as is becoming in all good and true subjects."

"Yet, I fear," replied Sir Philip Arundel, "there are many in which the King's health is no longer a standing toast: unquestionably republican feelings and principles have made great progress among the burgher classes generally, and have infected not a few above them."

"It is those sour-faced, canting rogues, the prick-eared, psalm-singing Puritans, that are doing all the mischief," said Sir Charles Lambert: "we want their ears, after the Turkish fashion, cropped by sacksful."

"But it is not calling them names, or cutting off their ears," said George Juxon, "that will put them down; neither will all the water in your horse-ponds quench the fire in any of their bosoms."

"Very likely; but there is nothing like trying what will stop them; and as sure as ever I catch any of the hypocritical rogues praying and singing near our parish they shall have a bellyful of muddy water, and a back-load of smart blows with whip or cudgel."

There was an expression of most irrepressible disgust on the countenance of Cuthbert Noble as Sir Charles uttered this brutal speech; which Sir Charles observing, he turned quickly to Sir Oliver, and added, "These are times in which we should look well to all our housemates, for fear we should be fostering some of these godly knaves, who cover their false hearts with closed lips and demure faces, and may corrupt our children and our servants."

"You mean me," said Cuthbert, starting on his feet with an energy which startled every one at table, and took Sir Charles so totally by surprise that he turned pale and livid, and seemed at a loss for words.

"Sir Oliver," pursued the youthful tutor in a glow of indignation that overspread his cheeks, and made his eyes glance fire, "I have long and often endured the contemptuous and studied insults of your haughty kinsman on his visits here; and while they were only directed against me as a poor scholar and a dependant, it was well: — happy in your favour, and in the attachment and respect of the gentle young master,

who is my pupil, I could afford to look down upon the dwarfish stature of so mean a mind; but when he would thus —— ”

Before it was possible to arrest him, Sir Charles, who sat upon the same side of the table, had run behind him, and, ere he could turn, inflicted a deep wound in his back with a large hunting-knife. The young student fell, bathed in his blood, upon the floor; and all the household, already brought near to the door by the loudness of the voices, rushed into the hall. Nothing was more affecting than to see the terrified agony and loud sobs of the noble boy Arthur, who stood over his fainting tutor with tears, and would neither be comforted nor removed.

George Juxon had instantly seized Sir Charles with an iron grasp. Sir Oliver was troubled, and scarce knew how to act; while Sir Philip Arundel, the most self-possessed of the party, desired the attendants to send swiftly to Warwick for a surgeon, and suggested to Sir Oliver that the aggressor should be committed to his charge, and that he would take him to his own

home, and be responsible for his appearance to answer for the crime which he had just committed, when the charge should be preferred against him in due order. But George Juxon required that he should remain in custody at Milverton until it was ascertained whether the stab inflicted on Cuthbert might not prove fatal.

The ladies of Milverton, who were absent, walking in the grounds, were happily spared this painful scene. To the exclamations of wonder, regret, and even condolence, with which Sir Charles was addressed by some others of the party, he answered nothing, but stood with lips closely compressed in sullen scorn and in a dogged silence.

Juxon unhanded him, after Sir Philip promised that he should for the present be kept close guarded, and gave all his attention to Cuthbert, who was borne slowly and carefully up into his chamber, and his wound there bound up with a temporary dressing by Juxon himself, till proper assistance should arrive. This done, he left him for a while in the care of the servants, while he went down to aid in

composing Sir Oliver and the ladies of the family.

This young clergyman, who was a distant connection of the good bishop of the same name, the treasurer at that time of the King, was a good specimen of a particular class of richly beneficed clergy, not uncommon in his day. He was a ripe scholar, a kind, orthodox churchman, and a manly country gentleman. His habits were those of his time : they grew out of the circumstances of that period and the state of society in all country places ; and he had seen his own pious and dignified relative hunt his own pack of beagles, without a thought that he was doing any thing more than taking a vigorous exercise, beneficial alike to the health of his body and his mind.

Juxon was among, but above, sportsmen. He had a wealthy rectory, and lived hospitably with his equals, and charitably towards the poor. In the discharge of his parochial duties, he was sensible and serious : he valued books, and he had a due appreciation of genius.

He had been of the hunting party this morn-

ing, and was thus a guest at Milverton, where he had long occasionally visited, and where, upon a former day, he had chanced to have rather a long and free conversation with Cuthbert, and, albeit widely different in their habits, had found common ground of interest in the subjects on which they talked, and they had parted well pleased with each other. Had they touched on politics, indeed, they would have differed; for Juxon was a most stanch supporter of the court party: through evil report and good report he stuck close to the crown; he wrote for it, spoke for it, and was ready to lay down his life in the defence of it; but he was of too large a mind to wonder at the opinions of those opposed to the government of the King; nor was he blind either to those abuses of the prerogative which had first awakened a spirit of resistance in men of undoubted worth and patriotism, nor to the grievous folly of those deplorable counsels, whereby the King had been induced or encouraged to force upon the proud and resolute Scots the discipline of a church to which they disclaimed allegiance.

Again, he was of a generous spirit, detested persecution in any thing, especially in religion and matters of conscience, and had felt, with the Lord Falkland, in all the earlier stages of the present quarrel. Nevertheless, a decided and sincere attachment to the monarchy, an unshaken respect for the personal qualities of the King, and a devotion to the forms and to the spirit of that church in which he was baptized, suckled, and educated,—a devotion quite distinct from, and independent of, any feeling of self-interest, as an incumbent, — caused him to resolve upon his own course in the coming troubles with a cheerful firmness.

These sentiments, if the conversation in the hall had not been so suddenly put an end to, would there have been elicited. He had not approved the outbreak and burst of indignation with which the sensitive and excited Cuthbert had so energetically appropriated the indirect, but mischievous, speech with which Sir Charles Lambert had sought to sow a suspicion of his tutor's integrity in the bosom of Sir Oliver; but he with his whole soul detested and abhorred

the cowardly and bloody ferocity with which the haughty and maddened barbarian had represented the contemptuous expression of Cuthbert. There sprung up in his heart at that moment a warmth of interest for the youth, which never afterwards, in fortunes the most dark and divided, entirely died away. But to return to the actual present. He saw the ladies, who had but just returned from a walk to the vineyard, in company with Sir Oliver, in a remote corner of the garden, and immediately joined them.

They were, as might be expected, very greatly troubled at the cruel occurrence, and pale with natural anxiety. Indeed there was an expression of concern upon the countenance of Mistress Katharine, so very deep, so profoundly sad, that even amid the sorrowful perplexities of the moment it glanced across the mind of Juxon, that, in one or other of the parties in this business, her own heart was most closely interested, and he thought that he had never before seen human beauty with such a divine aspect. At the readily adopted suggestion of

Katharine, her aunt Alice would have proceeded instantly to the chamber of the sufferer, to render him any service in her power; but Juxon requested of her not to do so, and recommended that the ladies should keep themselves quiet and apart until the surgeon arrived, and the gentlemen now in the mansion should have departed. Observing, too, the extreme perplexity of Sir Oliver, who had been and still was exceedingly agitated by this strange event, he entreated him to remain with them, and to keep himself calm and quiet for the present; assuring him that every thing which he could suppose him to wish in the present distress should be properly done, and that he would certainly not leave Milverton himself while he could hope to render the slightest service to Sir Oliver in this difficulty. There was an earnestness of manner about Juxon, and at the same time such a quiet tone of internal confidence in the resources of his own judgment, that they all submitted to his guidance; and Sir Oliver was greatly comforted and strengthened by the thought that so

wise and judicious a friend was near him in his necessity.

The boy Arthur was watching and walking forwards on the Warwick road, as if his doing so could hasten the coming of assistance, and was in all that confusion of the troubled spirits which keeps the young heart throbbing with fear.

In the library Sir Charles Lambert sat with folded arms and a lowering brow, while Sir Philip Arundel stood, looking from the window with a countenance simply expressive of cold annoyance.

Of the half dozen gentlemen, who were still grouped in the hall, one, after observing, that "All's well that ends well,—and, perhaps, after all, the young man's hurt might not prove dangerous, and that he always hoped for the best,"—stole his hand across quietly to the wine cup, and took a very copious draught; another remarked, that he must say "the young man was very irritating;" a third wanted to know what was the use of their remaining there, and said he wanted to go home; while a fourth

said, "One was a brute, and the other a fool : that he cared nothing for one, and knew nothing of the other."

But two gentlemen of a more thoughtful cast walked the hall in low and serious discourse, apprehensive by their words that the injury would prove fatal to Cuthbert ; and resolving that so fierce an action as that of Sir Charles should not pass unpunished. These were friends and neighbours of George Juxon ; and expressed themselves well pleased that, for the sake of Sir Oliver and his family, so useful and kind a person chanced to be at Milverton under the present circumstances.

At last the long expected surgeon arrived with the messenger who had been sent for him, both having used all diligent expedition. He was introduced into the chamber of the patient by Juxon, and immediately proceeded to examine the wound. At the first sight he shook his head, and said to himself, in a very quick, low tone of voice, "The wonder is, that he is yet alive ;" but on questioning Cuthbert as to his feelings, and finding some of the expected

symptoms absent, and on very carefully applying the probe, he cheerfully exclaimed, "There is good hope of you, young master: there is no man living could pass a sword where this blade has passed without injuring a vital part, if he were to try; but a good angel hath had the guiding of this one. If it please God to bless my skill, you shall do well; but it will be a slow case, and a tedious time before you will be fairly on your legs again."

"God's will be done," said Cuthbert, "for life or for death."

"If that is your mind," rejoined the surgeon, "my care will be well helped, and your cure the easier."

After cleaning and dressing the wound, and giving particular directions as to diet broths, and writing a prescription for the necessary medicines to produce composure and sleep, he took his departure, promising an early visit on the morrow.

The favourable opinion thus given of Cuthbert's wound was quickly made known throughout the mansion, and received as welcome by

all ; operating upon each according to their personal characters, and to the interest which they had felt in the issue of the violent deed which had stained the hospitable hall of Milverton. Sir Charles Lambert, indeed, but for the inconvenience and danger to himself, would have preferred the more tragical event. As it was, when Sir Philip Arundel returned from the gallery to the library, to announce to him that Cuthbert was considered in no present danger, he uttered no word beyond his wish instantly to return home.

“ You are surely thankful,” said Sir Philip, “ that this unpleasant affair has ended so much better than was feared. If you will not go and say so to the bleeding youth, which perhaps might just now too much disturb him, you will at least offer some words of atonement to your elderly relative, Sir Oliver, for the outrage done under his roof, and to a youth under his protection ; a deed to be only excused by pleading that your anger transported you into a paroxysm of madness.”

“ I shall go home,” said Sir Charles: “ are you ready ?”

“ I will never, sir, again cross your threshold: you are no English knight — you are not even a man. I shall send orders to my grooms to follow me on my road home.”

These words were swallowed by the same man who would have taken a life that same morning for a look of contempt; and with a white cheek, on which passion literally trembled, Sir Charles hurried to the courtyard, called for his horse, mounted, and dashing spurs into his sides, rode violently away — hatred in his own heart, and contempt pursuing him. In succession all the guests took their departure, except George Juxon, whom Sir Oliver requested to continue with him till the morrow; and who, more for the sake of the patient than of the family, assented. He was not sorry that Sir Charles had departed in the manner and in the temper described, nor did he care now to have his person secured; for his offence, though grave as it yet stood, was not of a nature that in

those days subjected to imprisonment any one who could find bail for his future appearance : and in the present case it was clear that Cuthbert would never prosecute a relation (albeit base and unworthy), yet a relation of Sir Oliver Heywood.

The good knight, though a kind man, a fond father, and an easy master, having walked through life upon a path of velvet as smooth as his own lawn, was sadly discomposed by this visitation of care ; and the very trouble and irregularity that was caused by it was felt by the old gentleman in many ways that he dared not confess to others, and was ashamed to acknowledge to himself. A great weight, indeed, was taken from his mind by the assurance of Cuthbert's safety ; for he was humane, and he liked the youth : but he had private reasons for a deep regret at the conduct of Sir Charles Lambert, and the interruption to their intercourse which would of necessity ensue, and almost wished that he had parted with his young tutor immediately after that discovery

of his political leanings which he had himself not many days ago so frankly made.

However, what had now befallen Cuthbert beneath Sir Oliver's own roof, and by the hand of his own relative, gave him new and increased claims upon the knight's protection and kindness, and there could be no further thought of their separating now till a distant period. The day wore rapidly away, and by the hour of supper some appearance of order was again restored to a mansion, in which every thing usually proceeded with the regularity of clock-work.

An intermitted dinner was an occurrence of which there was no previous memory or record in the recollection of the oldest servant on the establishment. Among the minor circumstances, and not the least affecting to the manly mind of Juxon, was a little dialogue which he overheard between the little girl Lily and the boy Arthur, the child being unable to comprehend the fact of one man cutting another man with a knife on purpose to hurt him. The true nature of the atrocious

action of course no one cared to explain to the little innocent : but she had learned from the servants that Master Cuthbert was run through with a knife by Sir Charles Lambert ; and she had come to cousin Arthur, in a grave and pretty wonder, to know what they could mean.

The next day, being the birthday of Sir Oliver, was that on which the masque in preparation was to have been represented before a party of the neighbouring gentry, who had been specially invited to celebrate that annual feast in the good old hall of Milverton. Of so pleasant a holyday there could now be no further thought ; and the May-day festival which was to follow the day after, though of course the villagers would have their dance according to the immemorial custom, would lose half its gaiety and spirit by the absence of the family from the manor house, and especially of the gentle and sweet Mistress Katharine, whose words and ways had won for her all the hearts in Milverton, and for miles round.

It was an evening memorable in the life of Juxon, that in which he first sat down at

table with the small family circle of the Heywoods; — in which he looked upon the majestic forehead of Katharine, — marked the gentle fire of her dark eyes, and the expression of all that is sweet and engaging in humanity about a mouth where her noble qualities were most fairly written.

After the grave and laudable custom of those good old times, the evening service from the Book of Common Prayer was invariably read to the assembled households of the country gentlemen. The office of reading prayers was usually in the absence of a clergyman performed by Sir Oliver himself as the priest of his own family, or at times he deputed Cuthbert to supply his place. The duty this evening was performed by Juxon in a solemn, feeling, impressive manner; and when it was concluded, and the family retired, he hastened to the chamber of Cuthbert, and finding that the composing draught had taken kind effect, and that he was dropping off into a comforting sleep, withdrew again with as soft a step as he had entered, and, exhausted with the fatigues

and the painful excitements of the day's adventures, he repaired to his own room, and thankfully lay down to rest. As he was extinguishing the lamp, his eye read the posy on the wall ; and he could not but feel a sweet pleasure to be reposing in such a mansion, and with such a family : —

“ Would'st have a friend, would'st know what friend is
best ?

Have God thy friend, who passeth all the rest.”

CHAP. VII.

Love is a kind of superstition,
Which fears the idol which itself hath framed.

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

CUTHBERT was awakened at midnight by pain : — the glimmer of the night lamp in the little room adjoining cast a dim light into the chamber where he lay ; and the breathing of the aged female servant, who sat there in watch, told him that she had been overcome by sleep. He cared not to disturb her, and made an effort to reach the cup of water on the little table by his side, but he found that he was no longer equal to the slightest exertion — he could not even change his posture. He endured his thirst, and tried to collect his thoughts, and gather up all that had passed in the hall, but he could not : he was dizzy with the sense of having been pushed to the very

brink of eternity, and snatched back again. A gleam shone upon the portrait of Luther which hung opposite. "Though he slay me yet will I trust him," was now his own whispered act of confidence in God, and he lay passive, silent, and hopeful. Not only was he heavily oppressed with bodily anguish, but his mind, after undue excitement, and proportionate depression and exhaustion, had sunk into a state of torpor. At the moment when Sir Charles Lambert made the insidious speech to Sir Oliver, which Cuthbert truly discerned to be aimed at his suspected principles, and still more basely at a supposed line of conduct which he had far too high a sense of integrity to pursue.

At that moment it seemed to him as if it was but fair and honourable to make open avowal of his true sentiments; but in the same quick glance of the mind he saw the first bitter and inevitable consequence. He must quit Milverton immediately, and for ever. Sir Oliver could no longer have retained in his family a man openly admiring the cause and

the course of that party in the kingdom which opposed the crown.

The collision in his mind of this fear of separation from so much that he loved, and of the honest impulse to do what was right, begat a momentary desperation ; and thus it was, that he rose upon that occasion with so unbecoming a want of calmness, and that he was about to preface his statement by exhibiting his unmeasured scorn for the base assailant of his character, but the too sure destroyer of his present happiness.

By the strange and bloody interruption of his purpose, the avowal of his political opinions was checked : his expression of contempt for Sir Charles had found utterance, and had been followed by a consequence, carrying with it, indeed, a severe rod of rebuke to himself for his rashness, but punishment in a tenfold degree more insupportable to his proud and brutal enemy ; and, as a crowning consolation to Cuthbert, his sojourn beneath the blessed roof of Milverton was at least, for very many weeks to come, perfectly secure. He had

felt no sorrow when he heard the surgeon pronounce his case as one that would be tedious — and that it must be long before he could be safely moved.

He would have had a stronger reason for joy and thankfulness, could he have known that he had been the cause of producing such a developement of the fierce and cruel temper of Sir Charles Lambert as saved Katharine Heywood, if not from actually accepting him as a husband, to which she would never have consented, at least from all the present persecution of his attentions, as well as from all expression of the blind but yet obstinate wishes of her otherwise indulgent father.

As Katharine lay wakeful on her pillow, believing and hoping that the life of Cuthbert would be spared, and no permanent injury would affect his future health or usefulness, she could not regret the occurrence of the morning.

Certainly she would have died rather than have gone to the altar with Sir Charles, but she would have remained continually exposed to his selfish addresses ; and this match having

been the favourite plan of her father from her earliest girlhood would have been perpetually urged upon her by him in those many indirect and distressing ways in which affectionate and obedient children are sometimes long and ungenerously tormented by covetous or ambitious parents.

One thing, when she first heard of the catastrophe, found a brief admission into her mind, and till she was made fully acquainted both by her father and by Juxon of all that had passed, and of the words which had been uttered at the time, was not entirely dismissed. This was no less than a fear, faint, indeed, and most reluctantly viewed as possible, that the quarrel might have arisen out of some feelings on both sides connected with herself. Nothing was farther removed from the true dignity of her noble character than the desire of making an impression upon any one; and it would have very seriously pained her, if those kind attentions, by which she had sought to make Cuthbert at home in the family, should have given birth in his breast to any warmer sentiment than that of respectful friendship.

Her humility and her modesty were so genuine that she was quite unconscious of her own personal attractions, and, though alive to the beauty of many of her female friends, she regarded it as a quality so inferior, and secondary in its power of interesting the heart, or winning the homage of the mind, as to give little advantage to its possessor in the daily intercourse of society. This opinion being in her sincere and rooted, her charms were worn with a grace and ease so natural, that her influence over all who came within their sweet and magic circle was irresistible.

This being her character, it was a great relief to her to be persuaded that there was not the slightest ground for the apprehensions, which she had slowly admitted. She was now surprised at herself for having entertained them even for a moment. She saw in the conduct of Cuthbert nothing more than a burst of human pride irritated into violence by the haughty insults of a worthless superior. Thus all her suspicions of the truth were lulled to sleep; and to alleviate the sufferings of Cuthbert

during his confinement, and to cheer his convalescence when the hour of it should arrive, was to her plain judgment a simple and a pleasing duty.

Sir Oliver himself passed a weary and feverish night,—all things seemed out of joint: one of his most favourite schemes was broken,—and his prospects of a peaceful and indolent old age, under the shadow of his own trees, were somewhat shaken. The trumpet of war had not, indeed, as yet sounded in the heart of England, though English blood had been already spilled freely on the borders. The few tall yeomen, with their goodly steeds, sent by himself to join the King's forces in the north, had marched fast and far only to meet an early end, and to swell the loss and the discredit of the ridiculous expedition against the Scots. With Sir Charles Lambert for a son-in-law, he would have felt better able to meet and take share in the coming troubles; and he reflected on the difficulties before him with dismay. Of battle or of death he had no fear,—though at his time of life, and with his habits, it was small service be-

yond that of a ready example of devotion which he could render in a camp ; but when he thought of Katharine, and of Arthur in his boyhood, and of his aged sister, his household presented but a defenceless aspect. However, after the scene of yesterday, he could not ever directly encourage any future addresses of Sir Charles to his daughter ; and it could not but suggest itself plainly to his own mind, as a gentlemen of a true English spirit, as far as personal bravery was concerned, that little dependence could be placed upon the courage or firmness of a man capable of the cruel and dastardly assault which he had yesterday witnessed. He had yet to learn the moral energies and the latent heroism of his noble daughter, and to discover the strength and the wisdom of a woman's mind, when the love of father and of country guide it in the path of duty and of honour. Some time was to elapse before the days of trial ; and, indulging that love of ease which was habitual to him, he strove to stifle or put away from him the unwelcome conviction that come they

must, and could not be averted. Therefore it was with no common sense of comfort, that, when he came forth into the gallery the next morning, he found Katharine, and his sister, and Arthur, already there, waiting to receive him with the kisses of fond congratulation, and saw his own portrait and that of his departed wife, who had been to him as an angel gently leading him for good, and ever watchful to guard him from error, framed, as it were, with choice and dewy flowers. He gazed at the portrait of his wife and then at Katharine, alternately, and was melted into a gush of grateful tenderness. All fears, difficulties, and troubles seemed to vanish in a present feeling of thankfulness and delight. He went instantly on to the chamber of Cuthbert: Juxon had been there from an early hour, and the surgeon was engaged at the moment in dressing his wound.

The sight of the amiable young man, lying pale and helpless, bandaged and in pain, greatly moved Sir Oliver. He took Cuthbert by the hand, and spoke to him in that warm and feeling language of condolence which is balm to a

sufferer's mind. The benevolent surgeon took a lively interest in his patient, and spoke most confidently of effecting a complete cure, — although he repeated, that the case would prove very tedious, and many weeks must elapse before he could be permitted, or indeed be able, to quit the recumbent posture. He gave directions that he should be kept particularly quiet in his actual state, and not be spoken with or disturbed throughout the day, except to give him necessary refreshment or medicine.

At the earnest invitation of Sir Oliver, Juxon consented to remain at Milverton till the evening. The day passed pleasantly away. The worthy knight recovered his usual spirits; Mistress Alice her composure; and Katharine Heywood, having much secret content and thankfulness at heart, looked like some gracious angel of peace and goodness.

It was a day of bliss to Juxon: — one never forgotten, but marked white for ever. He was one of those men who felt a reverence and tenderness for woman; and, whenever he addressed them, his eyes, his voice, his whole manner

plainly manifested respect. He expected in the female character gentleness, purity, and charity; and yet, by some strange inconsistency, he shunned the society of women, was seldom to be seen in those gay and glittering circles where they shone, and where he might have been soon disenchanted of his cherished illusions.

His residence in a sequestered parish in the country afforded him few opportunities of visiting where ladies were to be met; and being fond of all sports and manly exercises, and so ripe a scholar as to find study and the chase a pleasant relief to each other, he had not as yet been careful to seek opportunities of increasing his female acquaintance.

Whatever there was of silent and maidenly reserve in sweet Katharine herself towards common strangers, and upon ordinary occasions, vanished at a time like this, in the presence of so manly, so modest, and so frank a man as George Juxon. As the family sat that day at table, not a shade of embarrassment was visible in any of the party: — Sir Oliver was in high good humour; the boy Arthur looked at their

guest with those honest eyes which, in boyhood, fear not to show either like or dislike ; and the little girl Lily, permitted that day to dine in the hall, sat without shyness opposite to Juxon, and shunned not his smile or his word of notice.

The day wore on : — he walked with the ladies upon the verdant and velvet paths in the flower-garden, — he paced the terrace with Sir Oliver, — and his presence was felt by them all as a strength and a comfort.

The shade upon the dial had stole silently, but swiftly, forwards, and touched upon seven in the evening, when he ran up to the chamber of Cuthbert to press his hand at parting ; and having afterwards said his farewell to the ladies on the lawn, he descended to the court-yard, accompanied by Sir Oliver and the boy Arthur, mounted the gallant roan gelding upon which he had hunted his way down on the morning of yesterday, and again shaking the hand of his host, and accepting a warm invitation to repeat his visit soon and often, George Juxon rode out of the gates at Milverton with a very new and strange feeling.

The free animal, on which he rode, was impatiently checked as often as it broke from the measured walk at which it was now the pleasure of his master to travel homewards; and, whatever might be the cause, he was not allowed to perform in less than two hours a distance to be very easily accomplished within one. The reverie of Juxon was unbroken during the whole ride. The evening was mild, and the hedges were green, and the air was perfumed here with the scent of violets, there with the fragrance of cottage gardens or blushing orchards, and upon the woody or open parts of the road with the rich incense of the fresh-blown May.

The news of Sir Charles Lambert's violence had reached his parsonage before him; and in the stone porch his old housekeeper met him as soon as he had dismounted, with as much anxiety as if he had narrowly escaped murder himself. The good old body, with that genuine philanthropy of feeling which is as natural as their breathing to kindly natures, learned the safety of Cuthbert, whom she had never seen or heard of before, with a lively expression of

motherly joy ; and Juxon was roused to remember how very narrowly the youth had missed an early and melancholy fate. Truth to say, so much of pleasure had grown up within these two days from the very circumstances arising out of the assault on Cuthbert, for her young master now to dwell on, and there seemed to open before him so pleasant a prospect in future intercourse with the family at Milverton, that, perhaps, he hardly felt enough for the present sufferings of the unfortunate patient.

His thoughts, however, were soon diverted from Milverton, and from himself, by the entrance of his old gardener, to say the May-crown, which was kept in the summer-house, had been taken away, and that he had found a written paper on the shelf where it stood. This the old man handed to his master, saying he could not read it, but guessed it boded no good for the coming holyday, and that he had been gathering flowers to dress out the old May-pole to little purpose. George Juxon took the paper, upon which, in a stiff, quaint hand, were written these lines:—

“ This head in a crown, and that without ears,
Is the pleasure of prelates, of courtiers, and peers.
Dance, revel, and sing, ye butterflies gay ;
The time is at hand you shall weep, fast, and pray.
One holdeth the war-dogs, all ready to slip ;
Pleasure’s cup shall be spilled, and dashed from the lip.
To me is committed this message of woe :
The tears of the proud ones unpitied shall flow.”

He no sooner read it, than, quitting his supper, he went out into the village to ascertain if any copy of it had been left at any other place; and found, to his vexation, that one had been fastened to the May-pole, and had been taken down and read to half the people. Determined, however, that the customary sports should be neither hindered nor damped, he took home with him the village carpenter, set fairly to work, and in two hours, by the aid of lath, and pasteboard, and Dutch gilding, they finished off a crown far more splendid than the one stolen; and he wrote underneath it, with prompt good humour,—

“ The preacher hath said it — For all things a time —
For fasting, for feasting, for dancing, for rhyme : —
No rhymes without reason shall hinder our pleasure ;
We ’ll crown the old May-pole, and tread the old measure.”

This done, he again thought of Cuthbert's bed of suffering, and remembered him in his prayers. This little cross occurrence in his parish neither drove away his own sleep for a second nor delayed on the morrow the sports of his parishioners. Here, as in many other places, the popular and wise course of the minister preserved a good and happy understanding among the people. There is no social state more truly desirable than that of a well-ordered village population, where the miseries of the lane and the alley cannot reach; labour is performed in the open air; festivals are days of thanksgiving, danced through upon a green sward, to the nodding heads of merry musicians; and they see no crowns but such as are woven with roses for their May-queen, and know no sceptre but a white wand wreathed about with fragrant flowers.

CHAP. VIII.

Though their voices lower be,
Streams have, too, their melody ;
Night and day they warbling run,
Never pause, but still sing on."

GEORGE HICKES.

For three summer months Cuthbert Noble was confined to a couch ; and though latterly he was led forth into the garden, and suffered to lie down on a bench in the shade, yet his confinement had been lonely as well as tedious. No kindness on the part of any of the family was wanting : whatever could be thought of for his convenience and comfort was provided. While he was obliged to keep his own chamber, he was visited daily by Sir Oliver ; Mistress Alice and Katharine looked in upon him together, and inquired gently concerning his pain ; the boy Arthur would often forego his play in the garden, or his prac-

tice in archery, to sit and read to him ; and not a week passed without a friendly and cheerful visit from George Juxon. Nevertheless, he was evidently dejected ; and while he was grateful for all these attentions, nothing, it was observed, could effectually rouse his spirits to cheerfulness, although he repaid, by anxious words and quiet smiles, the least service which was done him. About the trouble which he unavoidably gave the servants, who, for their parts, were ever ready to oblige him, he was scrupulous even to anxiety. He seemed to pine after liberty — and would sit, for hours together, lost in deep thought, or in vacant sadness. It so happened that the clergyman of Milverton, whose manners were coarse, and whose morals were low, did not visit at the Hall. Although originally appointed by Sir Oliver, at the request of a friend, who, acquainted with his family, had taken little care to inquire more particularly into his character, he had early quarrelled with his patron, and preferred the freedom of an ale bench to the restraints of good society. This was unfortunate for Cuthbert ; as a learned and religious clergyman, residing in the village,

and intimate at the hall, might have kept him straight in the plain path of the true churchman. Now, though Juxon, had he been aware of all that was passing in the mind of Cuthbert, might have been truly serviceable in disabusing him of some strong prejudices, yet, as he presumed him to be a true son of the church, the subject was seldom named.

He came to cheer and amuse him if he could; and the very atmosphere of Milverton Hall was that of purity and delight to George Juxon. His summer months presented a strange contrast to those of Cuthbert. He gave up his buck-hunting in the afternoons: he could not abide the rude and noisy companions of that sport of which he had been always so fond; and now he might be seen, day after day, in the guise of an angler, on the grassy margin of a silver stream, or, not unfrequently, stretched at his length beneath a shady tree near the bank, or sitting under a high honeysuckle hedge; and if he were not chewing his own sweet fancies, some book in his hand, of good old-fashioned poetry, to aid his pleasant meditations. George

Juxon was now a lover — without melancholy, I do not say, — but only with so much of it as is ever welcome to a lover's mood, and gives a dignity to his passion. Nevertheless, his hope was unavowed; nor was he in haste: a long courtship was the fashion of those days; and a mistress seemed raised in the fancy of her admirer, by the thought that she must be slowly approached, and would be slowly won.

His family, his private fortune, his present provision in the church, and his future prospects from the favour of the bishop, were such, that Sir Oliver could not object to him as a suitor for his daughter, though he might give the preference to another; and certainly, with her father, the title of a baronet would have outweighed that of a dean. However, these circumstances could only encourage him in his more sanguine moments, for Juxon was a modest man; and when he called up the image of Katharine in his walks, and thought upon a certain majesty in her countenance, and how serene and unmoved she was, how unsuspecting of the admiration which she excited, he could

not but fear that she might prove indifferent to the suit of one so plain and unvarnished as himself, and that she would never entertain his addresses. Therefore it was that he nursed his love in secret, and patiently restrained all expression of particular regard for Mistress Katharine in his present visits to Milverton. How pleasant, in the mean time, were all those visits; how swiftly he rode through lane and wood, across field or common, as he went from home on those permitted errands of friendship; and at what a slow and lingering pace would he return from the gracious presence of this lady of his love!

He had often heard it rumoured that Sir Charles Lambert was thought to be the accepted son-in-law of Sir Oliver; but this he had always doubted from the very first moment of his introduction at Milverton; and he felt that Katharine could never have endured his attentions. By these, however, she could now be troubled no farther; for Sir Charles, being deeply mortified and ashamed of the frantic violence which he had committed at his last visit, had left his

home suddenly for London, and was solacing himself, for the contemptuous affront which he had received from Sir Philip Arundel, in the congenial atmosphere of bear gardens and cock pits. Nor had he forgotten how roughly he was handled by George Juxon, whom he at once feared for his courage, and hated for his virtues.

However, he was no longer a visiter at Milverton; his sisters, indeed, still rode over from the Grange occasionally to pass a day with Katharine, and twice Juxon was of the party at table.

To most eyes he would have appeared the admirer rather of these ladies than of Mistress Katharine; for Old Beech rectory was only four miles from Bolton Grange: and though he seldom accepted the invitations of Sir Charles, yet he met them often in hunting or hawking parties, and was apparently a very great favourite with them both. Sophy and Jane Lambert were both pretty: the one, with the rosy cheeks of health and laughing blue eyes; the other, brown and freckled, with an arch look that seemed to detect those secrets which men,

and women too, most anxiously conceal, with a provoking and unerring sagacity.

These good-tempered and warm-hearted girls had been at first sadly afflicted about their brother's conduct; but this last care concerning him was now six weeks old, and had been dismissed from their minds. He was, to their great contentment, now absent, and their tongues were again loosened to playfulness.

As the party sat at dinner in Milverton Hall one day, about the middle of June, and as Juxon was carving a capon, that he might help Mistress Alice to a delicate wing, —

“Prithee, Master Juxon,” said Jane Lambert with a very roguish expression of the eye, “did you not hear our merry voices on Wednesday evening as we killed a buck under Walton coppice? and did you not see us lift our velvet caps to you? and did you shut your ears to the pleasant horn? or were you charmed to sleep by the fairies under that broad beech tree in the Bird Meadow? or were you saying your prayers? or were you reading Master Ford's Lover's Me-

lancholy? or were you thinking of our Lady St. Katharine here at Milverton?"

Juxon was so confused at this last question that he put the wing of the capon into the sauce boat instead of on the trencher of Mistress Alice, and said, with a stammer and a blush,—

"Really, Mistress Jane, you are too bad; but I know that you dearly love a joke upon anglers: you are always jeering poor Moxon."

"O do not mind her," said Katharine Heywood, coming to his relief: "she is privileged to say what she pleases, without meaning what she says; and my poor name always serves to point a fancy, if she wants one: if she were not so young and so pretty, she might be taken up for a false fortune-teller, and a dealer in witchcraft."

"Cousin Kate, if I am a fortune-teller, I am a true one; and if a witch, you know I am a white one, and work marvellous cures. Shall I tell your fortune? and shall I name the name of a true knight in a far country?"

A glance from the noble eyes of Katharine, which no one perceived but Jane Lambert,

rebuked her into silence; and trying, though awkwardly, to laugh off the liberty which she had evidently taken with the feelings of Katharine, she sent her trencher for some venison, and said no more.

Sir Oliver, too, fastening upon the simple fact of Juxon having turned a fisherman, began rallying him for having made so bad an exchange, as to leave the merry and social sport of hunting for the dull and solitary exercise of angling.

"It is true," said the knight, "I have myself been forced to give up the jolly buck hunt; but, life of me, I could never take up with a rod and line in the place of it. I do wonder, when I see a man mope about the meadows, and stand, it may be, for hours, under the same willow, by the broken bank of a sluggish river, that it doth not end in his hanging himself for very weariness of the flat world."

"And yet," quoth Juxon, "fishing hath its pleasures, ay, and its sport too; but if the angler catch nothing, still he hath a wholesome walk in the pure air; and if he go abroad early, and listeneth to the matins of the heaven-loving

lark, he shall not want sweeter music than the cry of hounds, and the blasts of hunting horns."

"By my faith, Master Juxon, you are bewitched; but whether by old Margery or by the sparkling eyes of Jane I say not; by Margery, methinks; for the faint heart of an angler will never win such a sprightly lady of the woods as our Jane."

"Nay, nay, Sir Oliver, when a man is bewitched, and by love, too, as Mistress Jane will have it, his thoughts must be too roving and unquiet to sit still upon a mossy bank watching for the trembling of a quill."

"Ay, ay; but he may sit quiet enough, and not watch any thing but his own fancies. I do verily think that thou must be touched with some strange care, to let thy brave gelding race it round his pasture for the madness of his desire to follow the chase, at sound of which he neigheth for his rider, and thou sitting the while like some poor scholar alone upon a tree stump."

"At the least I find one blessing rests on anglers — where they walk, the grace of humi-

lity doth grow, lowly as the daisy, and plentiful as the meadow sweet."

"I think," said Katharine, "that Master Juxon has good right to walk the valley with his rod, without being thus rated for his pleasure; and if he useth to find good thoughts in all he meeteth by the river side in summer evenings it is more than hunters do in the forest."

"Marry, Kate, it is to get rid of thought that men go a-hunting. I tell thee that cares and sorrows, and wrongs and vexations, cannot keep pace with a bold hunter; self is forgotten; all is life, and joy, and wild delight. Troth I have lost mind and heart since the merry days when I hunted."

"I am of thy mind, Sir Oliver," said Juxon, "and the falling leaf of October, and the chill gloom of November skies, can never cloud the heart of a hunter; but when woods are green, and sunbeams warm, and birds are singing, methinks the yelp of a hound is unseasonable music."

"Well," said Jane, "all I know is, that you

seldom missed an afternoon last summer; and if it was an early hunting day and a stag turned out in the morning, in spite of the green trees and the warbling larks, Master Juxon was never last in the field; but I will rate you no more: for, may-be, you are afraid of the Puritans, and do study *Master Stubbes's Anatomie of Abuses*, and will give up the wicked ways of Esau, and turn shepherd — gentle shepherd, shall it be, or good?"

"Lady," said Juxon, gravely, "there are good men among the Puritans;" and seeing her colour a little at his tone, he added, with a smile, "and good anglers too; but, in truth, you have hit me hard: for there are good men, who are no Puritans, who think that the sport of hunting is not seemly in a parson, especially in times like these."

"Puritans or no Puritans," said Sir Oliver, "I hope you don't mind the muddy race that croak these black lessons of duty. I do not know whether they be fools or knaves; but they would preach us into walking tomb-stones, each showing its *memento mori*."

“Beyond all question,” replied Juxon, “they are wrong in many things; and push their severity against things innocent and pernicious with little or no distinction, with a strained application of Scripture prohibitions, and with a profound ignorance of human nature; and they seem only to discern God in clouds, and to hear him in the thunder. But there are men of great and stern virtues among them; and, it may be, of gentler hearts and gentler views than we give them credit for.”

“I don’t believe a word of it. They are fanatics in religion, and knavish traitors in their politics: you think of them with more charity than I do, and it is a false charity, Master Juxon. There was one of my own name and kin among them: he turned republican, forsooth; old England, forsooth, had no liberty; our good church was a harlot, and all the rest of it; and he would seek true freedom in the forests and swamps of New England; and away he went with wife and daughters, and a son, whom he had made as great a fool as himself. A youth, sir, that bearded me with his treason at my own

table. I sent him packing at midnight, sir, and would not let him sleep the night under my roof; and, in good truth, he was as ready to go as I to bid him; and now he and his father are felling trees in America for aught I know, or care, indeed."

Katharine Heywood proposed to her aunt and the Lamberts that they should go into the Lime Walk, and Juxon would have turned the conversation; but Sir Oliver, with the images of his absent cousins before him, went on venting his feelings, as if in soliloquy. "The son of a clergyman, too, sir, a younger brother of mine, long dead, and he himself having been the faithful servant of a king, well accounted of for valour and discretion in the camp of the great Gustavus, where he commanded a regiment of musketeers. He to turn against kings and good order! He that punished a fault against discipline like a sin against Heaven, and taught his son that obedience was the first duty of a soldier, to come home, with his brave boy to his own country, and teach him to flout at the majesty of the crown! Troth, sir, the king was quit of

bad subjects, and I of troublesome relations, when they took ship for the Plantations. I wish all that are as fantastic in their notions would follow them." At the close of this burst, the old gentleman took a cup of wine with an eagerness that sought relief, and a trembling hand, that betrayed how deeply he was agitated by angry feelings.

Juxon, very unwilling to hear him further on so painful a subject, asked permission of the knight to go and visit Cuthbert Noble for half an hour, and promised to join him afterwards in the bowling green for their customary rubber. As he passed out of the hall, a serving man was coming in with Sir Oliver's pipe and tobacco-box; and leaving the strange weed to perform its calming office, Juxon, happy to escape, ran up stairs to the chamber of Cuthbert.

The surgeon was seated by his side; and from the conversation, which, although they concealed not the subject or the tenour of it at the entrance of Juxon, they soon dropped, it was evident to him that they had a mutual understanding in matters of religion and politics, and were both of

them friendly to the cause of the parliament. It had so chanced that, during the whole of his confinement, Cuthbert had, in the person of the surgeon who attended him, been daily in contact with a mind very deeply imbued with serious and severe principles. By this man Cuthbert's heart had been probed to the quick; and, under his influence, combining with a strong predisposition in itself, was made sad and heavy.

CHAP. IX.

Passions are likened best to floods and streames ;
The shallow murmur, but the deepe are dumb.

RALEIGH.

WHEN, at the proposal of Mistress Katharine, the ladies left the hall, they proceeded to the Lime Walk: here they separated, Aunt Alice taking Sophia Lambert aside to show her a late addition to her aviary, and Katharine leading forward Jane towards the fish-pond, where, upon a low bench, placed under the broad arm of a noble cedar, they sat down quietly in the shade.

Under all the disadvantages of a most neglected education, and a rusticity of manner very near to rudeness, Jane Lambert had some rare and valuable qualities, which greatly endeared her to those who took the pains to discover them. This Katharine had done. As for the last three years she had been thrown much into the society

of the Lamberts, owing to their residence at Bolton Grange, and the frequent, but yet unavoidable, visits of Sir Charles, she had studied all their characters thoroughly; and the result of her observation satisfied her, that in Jane there was at the bottom a fund of sterling worth, high courage, and genuine affection. Her attainments were few and very imperfect; but she had a vigorous and a healthy intellect, which digested well the best and most generous sentiments of the few books which she was careful to read. Not a tenant or cottier upon the estate of her brother but had a look of honest love for Mistress Jane; and the falconers and foresters were proud of a bright lady who knew their craft so well, and had so true an eye for the spot of a deer or for the dim-seen quarry. If any poor man had a favour to ask of Sir Charles, it was through her, as the ready advocate of all who needed help or implored mercy, that the petition was preferred. Her admiration and love for Katharine Heywood were unbounded: she looked up to her as a model of exalted excellence, and with that affection which par-

takes of reverence; not that this was of a nature to check or chill the natural display of fondness in their ordinary intercourse; but at times the power of the loftier sentiment over her was so great, that her exuberant and unguarded levity would be in a moment abashed and driven away by one look from Katharine. Thus it had been to-day at table; and now, as they sat, she pressed her hand upon the shoulder of Katharine, and leaned her cheek upon it, and said feelingly, —

“Dearest cousin Kate, why did you look so very sad and so very grave to-day? I was only joking; do not be angry with me, my sweet coz: I shall fret if I think you have been really angry.” Katherine bent her face and kissed the presented cheek.

“Was I ever angry with you, Jane?” she asked. “You know that I never was; but it is true that you often make me very anxious for you, and sometimes quite sad, by your ill-timed and thoughtless gaiety. Consider a little more the consequences of idle words, and their effect on strangers.”

“Well, my dear, I will: but there is no harm

done, for I do not look upon Juxon as a stranger; and he is so sensible, and so good-tempered, that he will never take any speech by the wrong handle, and so honest and straightforward, that he will never look under it for a hidden meaning."

"But yet, Jane, even Juxon will think it odd, that while the victim of your brother's passionate frenzy still lies on a couch helpless with his wound, and while your brother, who has narrowly escaped committing the heaviest of crimes, has absented himself for very shame, his sister should sport, as if nothing had happened, and be as playful in her words as a girl without care."

"Do you think so? I should be sorry for that: but you know that I do not love my brother; and Cuthbert is safe from all danger, and out of all pain; and you are well, cousin, and not the sadder for this accident, if I know your heart as well as I love your happiness; and why then should I not appear cheerful, when, in truth, I am so. I should be vexed, indeed, if Juxon thought the worse of me; for he is one

whose good opinion is worth having; but as for that of the world, I care not a jot about it."

"There you are wrong, dear Jane: the opinion of the world may, and must be, in some things, despised, but the rule of its established proprieties and gentle observances can never be transgressed, without bringing some heavy penalty on the offender."

"I do not love the world so well, dear Katharine, as to care for either its frowns or its favours; and I looked not for an advocate of its cold maxims and its deceitful forms in you — let it see me as I am."

"There is your error, Jane: it cannot, it will not, it cares not to take the trouble to see you as you are; it looks only at your *seeming*; and though to be is better than to seem, and many seem fine gold that are but base metal, yet no one can despise the judgment of the world without rashness and without danger. They who place themselves above the opinion of the world, and the best rules of society, cast off a useful and an appointed restraint in the discipline of life."

"Sweet coz, I love to hear you lecture, but

you will never make me wise: I was born under a common star, and reared with foresters:—look as I like, and speak as I think.”

“Ah, dear Jane, you will some day learn to govern your bright looks, and to keep your sweetest thoughts locked closely in your heart. Wisdom herself, and, perhaps, though God forbid, sorrow will be your teacher.”

The serene eyes of the majestic Katharine were clouded, for a passing moment, with such a sadness as a compassionate angel might have worn; and she pressed Jane tenderly to her breast.

“Promise me,” she said, “dearest cousin, promise me faithfully that you never again hint even to any human being, the idle fancy that hung this morning on your lips, or the name you would have connected with it.”

“The promise has been already made in my own mind: your look was enough to make me wish the light word unspoken, and the tongue that uttered it blistered for a month to come. You are the only one at table who could have understood my allusion. I am certain that

the most distant thought of my meaning could not enter the mind of your father or your aunt."

"This, I believe, and it is well it should not: the bare suspicion, harboured in his mind, would make him miserable for life, and embitter his last moments with unworthy fears. I know his nature well: much as he loves me, and confides in me, to pacify his anger, and quiet his jealous apprehensions, would be, even for me, an impossible achievement; and yet he knows, or should know, that I am an English daughter."

"How is it, Katharine, that you command all hearts? that not a man approaches you but he is at once, as by some sweet force, compelled to love you? and yet it is no wonder: there cannot be on earth another Katharine."

"Cousin, this is idle and wicked talk; you must not use such vain and sinful words: would you could see me as I see myself, when, prostrate in weakness, I implore and find strength where alone it is to be obtained; but you cannot understand me yet."

"Nay, Katharine, do not rebuke me so sharply for simple truths: why Charles himself is so

tamed and altered for the day whenever he returns from Milverton, that I have sometimes been selfish enough to wish to see you his, in the hope that I might find a brother changed in nature; but no, dear Kate, I love you too well ever seriously to dwell on such a desire."

"Jane, do not, prithee, do not pursue this foolish fancy further."

"It is not fancy: can I not see? have I not eyes, and the perceptions and sympathies of woman? I tell you, the poor woe-begone scholar, that lies lonely on his couch above there, did look upon you as good men look up to the blue heavens."

"Cousin, I will not stay another moment with you if your discourse is not changed to some better tone than these weak and unwomanly delusions of your idle brain do give it."

"As you will, blessed coz, I say no more; but one need not be very deeply read in love-craft to prophesy that one of these fine days the worthy young rector of Old Beech will tell you that himself which I may not tell you for him."

"Jane," said Katharine, as she slowly rose,

and they moved back towards the Lime Walk; "you are not, my dear girl, serious, I hope, in this last surmise: you are not in earnest: it would greatly perplex and trouble me if I thought you were, and had good reason: about Cuthbert I am sure that you are altogether mistaken."

"No, Katharine; I am a poor unfashioned creature, with little knowledge of the world, and little skill in books, or fair accomplishments: but this one gift I have,—I can read the human countenance, and see written thereon the thoughts of the heart, the play of the secret passions, the inclinations of the inner will, in characters plain to my faithful eye, and plainly I repeat my conviction that both these men do love you. The one will give you no trouble: his flame will burn within his melancholy heart, like a lamp glimmering in a tomb; but the other will make open avowal of what he is proud to feel, and will surely be courageous enough to confess: now do not look so pale and grave, but thank me for the timely caution. Kiss me, sweet coz; my sister is calling for me, and we must go." The tall and queen-like Katharine

folded her young cousin to her heart ; and Jane felt a tear fall heavy on her cheek as they embraced and parted.

Katharine had one of those fine and stately forms which the sculptor of ancient times would have chosen to copy with his happiest skill, as the incarnation of wisdom. Her features were Roman ; her dark hazel eyes were long and even, and there shone in them a soft, chaste fire ; her mouth was pensive ; but though the expression of her countenance was ever serious, yet was it human, gentle, and she would more fitly have represented the melancholy vestal, than the calm, passionless Minerva. She returned leisurely to her favourite cedar, and seated herself in that sad repose of the mind into which even the strongest and most virtuous will sometimes allow themselves to sink, as a short relief from the internal conflict. It was clear to her that Jane had penetrated that one secret, which she would hardly confess to herself, and which she could have wished had been altogether confined to her own bosom, and that one other, from which she felt resolutely and

for ever divided. It was strange that the open-hearted girl had never mentioned it before ; it was well that she had only now hinted it so vaguely as to leave it impenetrably veiled to others ; it was well, too, that she had thus early arrested the danger of all further discovery, and obtained from the fond and faithful Jane that promise of secrecy, on which she could safely rely. Still it was disturbing to her pure and noble spirit, that even this sweet girl should be privy to her heart's great trial. However, Jane would understand her future silence on the subject, and well knew that those confidences, which the weaker order of women are ever ready to pour into the ear of the female friend, would never pass her lips. She held them too sacred, and she had that dignity of soul which in a sorrow of that peculiar nature is all-sufficient to itself. Could Cuthbert from his couch of patient suffering, or George Juxon from his solitary rides and walks, have looked in upon the heart of Katharine, and seen the image, which often rose before her mind's eye, and as often as it did so was felt to be a cherished one, the former

would have striven against his weak idolatry yet more resolutely than he already did, and the manly Juxon would have given to the wind his vain hopes, and would have forborne to distress her with the language of a suitor.

Katharine did not return to the mansion till long after all the guests had departed.

It was the hour of supper; but she pleaded headache, retired to her chamber, and seated herself at the window to watch the dying day. There was a universal calm in nature; every leaf was still: there was a holy hush around; colours of a blessed hue streaked the far western sky; they grew faint, they faded, and the grey gloom of a summer's night rested upon all things. She was roused from a long reverie of sweet though solemn fancies by the entrance of her maid with a lamp, and in a few minutes afterwards she was joined by her aunt Alice.

There was never in any nature more of the milk of human kindness than in Mistress Alice:—her own disappointments had subdued her vivacity, without souring her temper, or freezing her manners. Forgetful of herself, she lived for

and in the happiness of others, and her niece Katharine was to her as a daughter; — not that she exercised any thing like a mother's control; Katharine had so ripe an understanding, and so mature a judgment, that Mistress Alice leaned upon her mind as though it were that of a sister or a bosom friend, to whose opinion she was pleased to defer her own.

She loved Sir Oliver with a true affection, but she was not blind to the faults of his character. She knew him to be impatient of contradiction, full of strong prejudices, easy and indolent—the being of habit and of custom—but violent when thwarted, and selfish when opposed. Nevertheless a kind brother, a fond father, a liberal master, and a most loyal subject. It always deeply grieved her when she heard him speak harshly of her nephew Edward Heywood, and his son Francis, for they were the offspring of an unfortunate brother, to whom she had been very closely attached from her childhood.

“This has been a trying day to me as well as to you, Katharine,” she said when they were

left together. "I think my poor brother allows himself to be more troubled about public matters than is good for him; and I wish that he would avoid the mention of your unhappy cousins in connection with those subjects—however wrong they may be, they have cares and troubles enough for pity, rather than hard words and ill wishes."

Katharine looked steadily at her aunt when she began to speak, and was rather startled at her opening words; but as she proceeded, discerning clearly it was only a sympathy in common with her own that she invited, replied, quietly, that "it was indeed very painful to see the good temper of her dear father giving way so early in times like these, which were only the beginning of troubles; but consider, dearest aunt, he has passed all his life in pleasure and ease—my blessed mother made his peace her study; and, though she could never win him to her own happiest views of the only bliss, her whole life was a transcript of those gentle and charitable sentiments which were the secret springs of all her actions. He re-

posed upon her character, and found a tranquillity, of which he shared the comfort, but which lived not within his own breast."

"Well, Katharine, I am sure you follow in your mother's path, and as far as daughter may, you supply her vacant place in his esteem and reverence. He loves you not as parent loves a child. You are his daughter, but you are also, in all seemly matters, his cherished adviser :—I have often noted it, my dear, with joy."

"Do not humble me so sadly—my mother's path!—alas! I am far from it—far out of the way, when I think of her exalted hopes, her self-denying life, and her settled peace; and when I look within, I am ashamed, and may well tremble at the comparison:—but yet I cherish the memory of her bright example; and the words you have just spoken shall rouse me to do all by my father, which if her sainted spirit could look down upon us she would herself approve. I know the duty of a daughter, and I know how much the happiness and the honour of a father may be promoted by her due performance of it. You have well shown me

the better way. For my father, and to my father, I will devote my life, and cast self and all softer wishes behind me. When the first rough steps of difficulty are passed, the noble qualities of my father will all be seen :— bless you, Aunt Alice, for your sweet counsel.”

“ My dear Katharine, you are not wont to be thus excited: your calmness and your even dignity have ever been beyond your age: I meant simply what I said, and designed not, by any hint, to stimulate you to any course of conduct beyond that which I have always observed you to pursue: — you are not well — you think too much of what may happen — troubles are fast travellers, and need not be met half way — you are not well.”

“ I believe you are right — I cannot be well — the day has been oppressively hot — and my temples throb with pain.”

Mistress Alice taking from the dressing table a curious shaped bottle of eastern porcelain, which contained elder-flower water, sat down tenderly by Katharine, and bathed her temples with gentle care. The noble girl leaned back

upon her chair, silent, passive, grateful: — no sob escaped her; no nervous tears were allowed to fall; but to a keener eye than that of her benevolent aunt a slight quiver on the lip, and a heaving of the folds above her bosom, quicker than the wont, might have told that very deep and painful emotions were struggling in her full heart.

Mistress Alice would not leave her till she saw her quietly put to bed, when, giving her the kiss of peace and good night as her pale cheek lay upon the pillow, she took her lamp, and went softly out of the chamber.

Restored to solitude and silence, Katharine sent her sweet thoughts and prayerful wishes to that distant land, where, upon the narrow clearing of some tall and ancient forest, in their canvass booth or rude hut, after a day of new and unaccustomed toils, her self-exiled but heroic cousins reposed: the picture of their labours was to her mind primitive and sacred — and all the images presented to her fancy were peaceful.

CHAP. X.

Can warres, and jarres, and fierce contention,
Swoln hatred, and consuming envie, spring
From piety ?

HENRY MORE.

THE good parson of Cheddar was never informed of the severe misfortune of his son till all danger was long past, and his convalescence was advanced to such a point that he could assure his parents he should soon be perfectly restored to health and to his wonted activity and strength.

Noble and his wife were both deeply affected at the thought of all which Cuthbert must have suffered, and at the considerate care which he had manifested for their feelings. His letter was brief, and his relation of the conduct of Sir Charles Lambert was given in such a calm and quiet tone that it was plain he had learned the

hard lesson to forgive an enemy. Yet it contained some expressions which troubled his father with the too sure presage of that course which Cuthbert was about to follow.

He intended, it said, to leave Milverton at Michaelmas, and should recommend that Arthur, who was sufficiently forward in his studies, should be then entered at the University. "I shall not," it added, "accompany the dear boy to Oxford; indeed, with my sentiments, it would be alike unjust to Sir Oliver and to the youth himself to retain my present office in this family. Where a tutor is called upon to conceal his opinions and suppress his feelings (on the most important and the most sublime subjects which affect the present interests of society and the everlasting happiness of man), in his daily intercourse with his pupil, both parties are very seriously injured."

It was particularly remarked by his mother that, in this letter, while Cuthbert acknowledged, in general terms of warmth, the kindness with which he had been treated throughout his illness by the whole family at Milverton, and

while he mentioned the friendliness of Juxon, of whom they had never previously heard, and dwelt still more on his deep obligations to Master Randal, the surgeon, he never even named Mistress Katharine, of whom he had spoken with such a romantic warmth in his former correspondence.

“My dear,” said Noble, “Cuthbert has been on the brink of the grave, and his mind is full of all that has been solemn and awakening in that awful experience ; but it is not a good sign that he has avoided all detail of that experience to us. I doubt not that his piety has been deepened, but I am not without a fear that his head is taken up with new notions, both of doctrine and of duty, and that he was unwilling to open them out to us. However, if by any path he has advanced to a nearer and more affecting view of his Redeemer than that to which he has hitherto attained, let us rejoice and thank God. He has all along been deficient in that simplicity of view which begets humility, peace, and joy: — he refines too much on every subject which is presented to his mind ;

muses when he should act ; speculates when he should pray ; and is lost in the cold and unsubstantial clouds which veil the mountain, when he might stand upon the serene summit in the warm light of the Sun of righteousness.

“ It was ever thus with him. In childhood we neglected to subdue his will, and we shall suffer, and he himself will suffer for our fond but mistaken indulgence.”

“ I am sure, dear, that he was always affectionate and dutiful, and always will be.”

“ Nay, Constance, that does not follow. He will always love us, I am well persuaded ; but whether he will remain obedient to our wishes in those trying scenes which may sooner or later be presented to our eyes is very doubtful.”

“ Well, Noble, it will be time enough to think of that when the trial comes : — happen what may, I feel certain that all will be safe and happy where you are. God ever takes good care of his own ; and I always feel that there is a blessing and a guard round about our dwelling, for your dear sake.”

“ Wife, how can you talk so weakly. What

is there in two worms of the earth, like you and me, that should procure for us an exemption from calamity?—but this is unprofitable talking—sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof—to enjoy is to obey—and the voice of thanksgiving is melody. Let us bless God for past mercies, and bless him by trust for all future goodness.”

Their conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Peter, to say that Master Daws, the sour precisian, who, it may be remembered, would have before prevented the customary sports and pleasures on the festival of the May-day, was at the gate, and wanted to see Parson Noble, for a few minutes, on very urgent business.

To rise and go out and ask him into his study with all courtesy was, of course, the duty of Noble, both as a brother minister and a Christian gentleman; but it was with no doubt as to the nature and object of his visit that he did so, and with a desire to bring their interview to as early a close as might consist with common civility.

The contrast of the two parsons as they entered the study, and as Master Daws seated himself in the tall chair which Noble drew forward for him with a quick and rather, indeed, an impatient motion, was comic in the extreme, and would have greatly diverted any of Noble's old college cronies, as it would, of a truth, the good vicar himself, could he have looked on, and been spared the vexation of playing as a principal in the dull performance.

Master Daws was a tall, gaunt, bony personage, of a stature exceeding six feet by nearly two inches: he presented a rigid outline of sharp angles from his cheek bones to his pointed and protuberant ankles. His features were coarse; his complexion muddy; his eyes round and dull; his forehead low; and there was an expression of bad temper about the corners of his mouth. His black hair was cut close, and he had thin weak eye-brows.

He seated himself with a slow solemnity of manner; placed his tall greasy cane erect between his knees, and folded his clumsy hands upon the top of it; turned up the whites of his

eyes in a pretended ejaculation; and in a drawling tone delivered himself of his hypocritical errand as follows:—

“My dear brother in the Lord—thou art esteemed a master in Israel—thou hast a name to live. I would fain hope that thou art not a willing partaker of the sins of thy people; but verily they stink in the nostrils of all true Christians, who are thy neighbours. We have conferred together—we are sore grieved—we are ashamed for thy sake—and I am come to reason with thee alone concerning the abominations which are daily committed in thy parish, lest thou perish and thy people with thee.”

The good parson listened to this strange address without anger, without wonder, and without reply. The graceful ease of his composed attitude of attention,—the clear light of his kind intelligent eyes,—his high pale intellectual forehead,—his frame slender, and a little bent with the weight of advancing years, and the thin white hairs scattered on his temples,—would have made the sincere but deluded fanatic hesitate to proceed, or would

have melted his remonstrance into all that was gentle and affectionate in expression. On the conscious, the interested, and the incensed hypocrite, however, his calmness had the opposite effect; and Master Daws, with a most stern tyranny of tongue, in language clumsily misquoted from the sacred books of the prophets, and grossly misapplied, went forward to denounce the wrath of Heaven against the poor rustics of Cheddar and their aged pastor. This speech we would rather leave to the imagination of such readers as may be familiar with the incongruous and disgusting jargon in which the sour zealots and the gloomy sectarians, who were then daily extending their severe notions, uttered their iron anathemas against the innocent gaieties of life. At the close of his very offensive harangue, he drew forth from his pocket a small volume in black letter, and presented it to the good vicar with these words: —

“Brother, I have been perhaps too warm; but the fire burned within me, and it is accounted the first duty of a servant to be faithful. It is my zeal for the Lord; — and herewith, in love

and compassion to thy poor blinded people, and in pity to thy soul, I do present to thee for thy private reading, and for the instruction of thy benighted mind, this book, which is ‘ *The Anatomie of Abuses : containing a Discoverie or briefe Summarie of such notable Vices and Corruptions as now raigne in many Christian Countreyes of the Worlde : but especially in the Countrey of Ailgna : together with most fearfull Examples of God’s Judgements executed upon the Wicked for the same, as well in Ailgna of late, as in other Places elsewhere. Very godly, to be read of all true Christians every where ; but most chiefly to be regarded in England. Made Dialogue-wise by Phillip Stubbes.* This wordy title-page, placing his spectacles upon his nose, he read slowly with a nasal whine, which the compression of the ill constructed spectacles he wore not a little assisted.

“ Neighbour Daws,” said Noble patiently, “ I do not need thy service in this matter, seeing I have on my own shelves the book of Master Phillip Stubbes; and I deny not that it contains some godly maxims and sound precepts, and it may have done some good by its ridicule of

many vanities, and its condemnation of many sins and abuses: but I think he distinguishes not between things innocent and hurtful, and tears up many pleasant flowers of God's giving, under the dark fancy that they are poisonous weeds; — for the rest that thou hast spoken thyself concerning the little flock and fold over which the providence of God hath made me the humble and willing shepherd, I will not call thee unmannerly and uncharitable. I have heard thee with pain, though with patience; and, while I give thee full credit for sincerity in thy opinions, desire not to hear them further, now or ever again."

As thus he spoke, he rose, and indicated by that action his wish that the interview should not be prolonged. Daws also, with a horrible smile upon his hideous face, in which was to be discerned all the mad irritation of a mean person, who felt himself despised, and for the moment baffled in producing alarm, raised himself slowly from his seat, and answered, — "Satan, the prince of hell, is lord over thy village and thy people — and he has blinded thy aged eyes,

and sealed thy dumb mouth : — verily the Lord shall visit for these things, and that speedily ;” — so saying, he stalked out with uplifted eyes, and as he passed the threshold stamped the dust from his feet with a vindictive action, and departed. “I wish that Cuthbert could have witnessed this scene,” said Noble, as he saw the ruthless and envious bigot pass forth out of the wicket, and stride angrily across the church-yard ; “ but the wish is vain.”

Upon inquiring of Peter, he learned that, on the preceding evening, this morose personage had found a dozen children playing round a small bonfire, in a glen about half a mile from the village, and celebrating, as a game of play, the festival of St. John’s eve, — the observance of which had in the present reign been discontinued. The joyous urchins, alike innocent of pagan or popish idolatry, were dancing about the flames, and tossing flowers into the rivulet, which flowed past the spot where they had kindled them, when Daws, who had his secret designs in many a walk which he took to the neighbourhood of Cheddar, came suddenly upon

them, and driving them off with execrations and blows, kicked the half burned sticks into the water : — the little fearless sinners, however, making a swift and active retreat up a rock, where they felt secure from pursuit, revenged themselves by shouts and laughter ; and in this the little fellow who had witnessed the ludicrous fall and flight of this same Daws on May morning, and who had been again recognised by him this evening, led the merry chorus of impudent little rebels with conspicuous glee.

Although Noble listened to this news with a smile, the severe and mischievous spirit evinced during his interview with Daws, both in language, tone, and manner, gave him more uneasiness than he chose to impart to his wife, to whom he related much of what had passed between them in a light and jocular vein. But, alone, he could not but be impressed with the conviction, that a curate of this harsh and malevolent character was a very uncomfortable and unsafe neighbour, and might hereafter prove dangerous.

However, he had now plainly paid his last

visit in the quality of brother clergyman ; and, if he was ever to come in that of enemy and accuser, he could only do so under the restraining guidance of that mighty, merciful, and mysterious Providence, which ordereth all things wisely and well.

The good pastor was ill qualified to counteract the intrigues, or to contend with the violence, of parties. He was a quietist, an optimist, a dweller at home, enjoying to-day, and taking little anxious thought for the morrow. His hours were divided between his parish, his study, and his garden.

Old Blount, the most honest and hospitable of English franklins, was the only neighbour with whom he could associate upon a footing of mutual intercourse : but there was not a threshold in the village which he did not often cross with some friendly inquiry or cheerful words upon his lip ; not a child, that would not rather run to than from him ; and the cottage curs were too familiar with his step and voice to do more than raise and turn their heads as they lay watching at the doors, when Noble passed by.

His chief recreation was the weekly visit to Wells. As regularly as the appointed day came round, the worthy parson mounted his old white mare, with her well stuffed saddle, rejoicing, in a seat covered with cloth of a pale sky blue, much faded, and he was carried at a meditative jog-trot to the fair and ancient city.

Here, at the house of his friend, he would refresh his spirits by listening to (and sometimes joining in the rich performance of) the best madrigals of the never surpassed composers of that day, and taking his part in most pleasant and tuneful exercises on the viol and the lute.

The troublous aspect of the times had of late somewhat altered the character of these meetings; and the two holyday hours were now for the most part, if not entirely, consumed in grave and anxious consultations on public affairs. The severe spirit of the church reformers of that period frowned upon every semblance of pleasure: to them the song of harvest, the dance of the village green, and the merry catch round the winter hearth, were things sinful and forbidden, and the peal of the solemn organ in the

house of prayer and praise was hated as an abomination.

Yet they might have read in Scripture, in the very words of holy men of God, that “the ear of the Lord listeneth to the song of the reaper, and the joy of harvest; and that he delights not to turn the dance of the vintage into mourning, nor to make the young cease from their music:” but because the good provisions of God are daily abused by the many, who consider not the gracious Giver of them, therefore they would have the bread of all steeped in tears, and eaten with the bitter herbs of mourning. Of a truth, in some degree every Christian man, and minister more especially, must be a mourner, and is: but the spirit would fail and faint if it might not also taste the rich consolations of a hallowed joy; and if, amid the labours, the toils, and the mean cares of the daily pilgrimage, man might not stoop to gather the flower at his feet, or pause to listen to the feathered choristers of God’s own temple, it would be to refuse and put away, with a sullen unthankfulness, the comforts which the Father of mercies has provided.

Of such enjoyments Noble was most fearlessly fond. To him the world of nature was a vast and richly illuminated volume; on the various pictures of which he could pore for ever, with all the wonder, and with all the rapture, of childhood:—"his Father made them all"—that was his feeling. The arrows of trouble and disappointment fell blunted from a bosom, the shield of which was a God seen, acknowledged, and felt, in all things visible, as the very essence of love.

CHAP. XI.

He makes the infirmity of his temper pass for revelations.

BUTLER.

THE summer months at Milverton rolled swiftly on, Cuthbert slowly, but perfectly, regained his strength; and, early in August, he was once more able to walk abroad and to take exercise on horseback; but his vivacity and animation did not return with his health: he was no longer the cheerful and entertaining companion at table, or in the intervals of leisure. Sir Oliver found him a dull restraint, and wearied of his presence: even his pupil, who was truly attached to him, and was still, in the hours of study, delighted with his preceptor, felt the sad and depressing change; and if it had not been for the frequent visits of George Juxon, would have been disappointed of many of those joyous and

manly exercises which Juxon delighted to encourage, and in which he excelled. The only diversions by which Cuthbert could now be attracted were fencing, and the use of the broad sword: but he practised them without a smile; and there was an earnestness of attention and a seriousness of effort about him, whenever he took a lesson from Juxon, which drove away smiles and jokes. His stamp was angry; the glance of his eye rapid and piercing; and after six weeks of occasional practice, when Juxon told him he would soon be a strong and complete swordsman, the grave scholar, so quiet and gentle in all his ways and words on common occasions, hastily and vehemently exclaimed, "Thank God."

"For what?" asked his good-tempered instructor, "for what do you thank God so warmly?"

"It matters not, it matters not," replied Cuthbert, hastily; "time will show."

Juxon put down his sword, and, looking him earnestly in the face, asked him if he was well?

“What a strange question ! quite well.”

“No, Master Cuthbert, it is not always that a man is well who calls himself so, or even who thinks himself to be so. We are alone ; we are friends ; tell me what has thus moved you ; tell me what it is that has so changed and saddened you ; what are the dark purposes which lie hid in your bosom ?”

“Methinks this question is yet more strange. I have no purposes that be not honest ; none that will not bear the light of open day ; but, yet, I may not care to trouble others or myself by babbling of them.”

“Does the blow still rankle in your bosom, Cuthbert ? Have you retracted the pardon uttered on your bed ? And do you mean to seek out Sir Charles, and make him do battle for your revenge ?”

“Master Juxon, that is not well asked : such purpose would be dark, indeed : was not my pardon spoken before God, and at the grave’s mouth ? No ; I forgave him as I hope to be forgiven ; nay, in that it was a stab which sought my life I forgave it more readily than I could

have done a blow; that, indeed, such slaves we are of pride, that might have rankled still."

"True—I had forgotten—and my words have wronged you; but, Cuthbert, whatever are your purposes, they do not make you happy. I met you the other day riding much faster than is your wont, and your countenance was clouded, and your teeth were set, as if in hottest anger, and you would not stop, but only muttered a good morrow as you passed swiftly by. What do all these things mean?"

"They mean that I am sick at heart for England; sick for the meek man's wrongs. I had just then met an aged countryman, his furrowed cheek newly branded, for a churchyard brawl: I questioned him closely, and found him a sufferer for conscience' sake, falsely accused and persecuted by a godless parson of his parish."

"Cuthbert, did the countryman tell truth? Did he name the parish and the parson?"

"He did; I know them well: in Oxfordshire was this outrage done, and the crime is not three months old."

"Well, here is a case of wrong to be made

known and to be redressed. Scandals there must be, even in the most sacred offices, when they are held by mere men. Some are cruel, and some are wanton by nature, and to punish these we have our judges and our bishops."

"Yes we have—and the same who ruled the decisions of the Star-chamber. The wrong redressed! it would be smiled at; and if it were punished, what then? There's nothing but the grave-worm can take away the brand from the old man's cheek: his grandchildren will put their little fingers on the mark and ask the story of it, and he will tell them what he told me, and more. It is a hard world, Juxon."

"And always was, and always will be. Legislation is a coarse thing: some innocent will always suffer with the guilty."

"The guilty! is liberty of conscience guilt? Look you, Master Juxon, there are good men and true ready to stand up for that liberty."

"And for a little more, perhaps: your secret is out; so, instead of our sword-play being mere exercise for pastime, after college fashion, I have been teaching the noble science of defence to a

stout Parliamentary, to an enemy of mother church."

"Nay; no enemy to any persons or any institutions, but to the oppressor every where, and to oppression every where, by whatever titles or names they may be disguised."

"You confess, then, that you wish an appeal to the sword."

"I say not so; but if it come, as it may, and as in my present judgment it surely will, I shall be well pleased that my fingers have been taught to fight; for I would not be wanting in the day of battle."

"I have heard you, Cuthbert, speak words of Christ's religion since your late illness, which I have thought of so sweet and heavenly a temper, as might well engage all men to follow the truth in love. Surely the weapons of a Christian's warfare are not carnal."

"I tell you, the fat heart of the oppressor is proof against all other, and they that govern with the headsman's axe must look to be wounded by the patriot's sword."

"Stop, Cuthbert, we'll say no more on this

subject — you are standing upon a precipice — the gulf beneath is treason.”

“Not against Heaven, Juxon; and it is a poor thing to me to be judged by my fellow man.”

“Yes, Cuthbert, against Heaven. Your father will say so.”

“Never; though it is true that my father is old and timid, and he would bear the errors of the crown in charity and in hope, rather than see them openly opposed by arms.”

“And you would punish them in the field of battle?”

“And gain a victory over the crown for the greater honour and more golden purity of the crown itself!”

“Are you so weak, Cuthbert, as to think that a crown, beaten from a king’s head by the sword, and lying soiled by the dust of a fall, can ever be replaced on the same brows with honour? — No! but among the successful rebels, some stern spirit would be found to wipe it and put it on; whose sceptre would have no peaceful globe surmounted by a dove; but would

rather be a naked sword crimsoned to the hilt with blood."

"Never, never : — you, like many good and generous persons, are the creature of prejudice and of circumstance; you do not see, and you will not believe, that the temple of true freedom needs only to be opened, and all the virtuous and the holy will flock there to worship in peace, and they will guard it alike from the rude tyrant and from the slavish rabble."

"Cuthbert, you dream, and will awake some day in bitterness of soul. But if these be your sentiments — if thoughts like these fill your mind and colour your gloomy fancies — no wonder that your looks are sad."

"My fancies are not gloomy. They are solemn. I am not sad, but I am serious. In visions of the night, I have seen this earth regenerate — its people walking in peace — holiness on the bells of the horses. I have heard the voice of thanksgiving and the song of praise. I have listened for sighs, and looked for tears, but there were none. I have asked about their

happiness, and they have told me, 'In this region there is no one to hurt or to destroy: — we do not teach every man his neighbour, for from the least to the greatest we all know God.' Such have been my revelations; and I have been called, and chosen by name, to join that sacred band, which is to awaken a slumbering and captive people, and lead them forward to prepare the way for that monarchy of truth and universal love which is even now about to descend and bless mankind. The spear shall be broken, the sword turned into a ploughshare, and the sovereign Lord of all shall stand a second time upon the earth, and proclaim his promised reign of holiness and peace."

Juxon listened to this rhapsody with awe and pain; and not without an effort to shake the strong delusion, which was evidently taking a fast hold upon the mind of Cuthbert.

"My dear friend," he said, laying his hand gently upon his arm, "I confess that you greatly alarm me. Consider that, for the first two months after your wound, you were very weak in body; you were often obliged to have recourse to

opiates to procure rest; and you was not in a state to examine the impressions made on your mind, and to separate illusion from reality. There is nothing wonderful in these phantasma having floated past your mind's eye: it is with sounds as with sights; the music of a dream is often clear and ravishing to the mind's ear; and our name may be thus, to our sleeping fancy, very distinctly called and connected with some message or charge of solemn import spoken as by a voice from Heaven. Or, it may be, Cuthbert, that the enemy of your soul, knowing that you can only be led aside from the path of duty and peace by the fair semblance of true religion and freedom, hath assumed these angel shapes to lure you to your ruin.

“ I can understand the plain and manly language of a Hampden, but this I cannot. It is unhealthy; it is the false fire of the fanatic. Rouse your intellect, and turn away from these notions, or you will be entangled and overcome: strangle the serpent while you have strength to do so.”

Cuthbert replied only by the grave smile of

one so firmly persuaded of the truth of his own convictions as rather to pity than resent the very unwelcome effort to disturb them. However, he now communicated to Juxon that, in another month (it being then the end of September), he should accompany his pupil to enter at Oxford, and should there leave him, and proceed himself to join a friend in London. This arrangement, he observed, would enable him to reach the capital about the time when the new parliament was to assemble; for it had been just resolved by the King, in his great council of peers held at York, that a parliament should be called to sit on the third of November following.

George Juxon was truly concerned to find that Cuthbert was so far gone in his views, that to reclaim him seemed hopeless; but there were so many amiable and engaging points in his character, that he could not allow any one chance of recovering him from a course which he truly thought would distress his father and destroy his own peace of mind, altogether neglected.

He was aware that Cuthbert maintained a scrupulous silence on the subjects on which he

had just spoken in his intercourse with the family ; but he had often observed that, whatever was the matter of discourse at table, or elsewhere, the opinion of Mistress Katharine had great weight with him. He determined, therefore, to make a full disclosure to her of the state of Cuthbert's mind, and to engage her good offices to dissipate, if possible, the cloud of illusions which obscured or dazzled his present judgment. He was, however, obliged to defer this step by the sudden arrival of Sophia and Jane Lambert; the latter of whom instantly joined Sir Oliver and the ladies in the gallery, to communicate the arrival of their brother at the Grange, and his intention of again presenting himself at Milverton that evening, to express his sorrow to Sir Oliver for what had passed in the spring, and to acknowledge duly the frank and Christian forgiveness of Cuthbert Noble.

Juxon learned from Sophia Lambert that Sir Charles having met with Sir Philip Arundel at some place of public amusement, had demanded satisfaction of him for the insulting words which Sir Philip had addressed to him on

the evening when they last parted at Milverton; that they had retired to an adjoining tavern with their friends; and Sir Philip having been wounded, the quarrel was amicably adjusted, and the parties shook hands.

By this duel, Sir Charles at once succeeded in stopping the mouth of one who would have reported the occurrence at Milverton more to his disadvantage and shame than it was yet considered among his London acquaintance, and knew that he should in some degree recover his lost ground with Sir Oliver and his neighbours in Warwickshire. For the credit of their family the sisters were naturally desirous of this; and, therefore, they had preceded their brother with cheerfulness, and with an earnest anxiety to secure him a good reception. Jane, indeed, well knew the feelings of Katharine Heywood, and loved her happiness far before that of Sir Charles; but still he was a brother, and the head of their house; and though she secretly determined to divert his attentions and his hopes from Katharine, she wished that the two fami-

lies should resume their old footing of neighbourhood and frequent intercourse.

The various projects devised by the kind heart of Jane Lambert were always most readily aided by an acute and contriving mind.

She had already rendered Katharine a most important service in the matter of George Juxon's suit, which she had put an end to before any declaration of it distressing to the fair and noble object of it had been made.

The modesty, the good sense, and the manliness of Juxon, enabled him, with very little assistance from the delicate though playful management of Jane Lambert, to discern the painful truth. He plainly saw that Katharine Heywood was not at all disposed to favour, or even entertain, his pretensions as a lover; and he made a worthy and successful effort to stifle in his breast the sentiment, which she had inspired, that he might still enjoy the privilege of visiting at Milverton as an intimate, and might attain to the happy and soothing distinction of being her true and faithful friend: — this consolation was already granted to his manly heart.

Katharine saw and valued his sterling qualities; and to no one in the whole circle of her acquaintance were her manners more open, cordial, and confiding than to George Juxon.

It was a curious thing, that evening, to see with what a shy, embarrassed air the noble Cuthbert, noble even in his errors, received the silken, though forced and momentary, submission of the man, whose savage anger had well nigh deprived him of life. No looker on, ignorant of their peculiar relation to each other, at the first interview, could have remotely guessed it from the manner or bearing of either.

The cheek of Sir Charles was indeed coloured by a deep, though transient, stain of crimson, as he made his obeisance to Mistress Katharine, and took her slowly extended hand, — but with Sir Oliver he was quite at his ease immediately; not so, however, with Juxon, whose presence a little disconcerted him throughout the evening.

As the weather was, for the season, very open and mild, and as there was a fine moon, it was soon arranged by Sir Oliver, that the party

from the Grange should sup at Milverton, and ride home by moonlight. To Sir Oliver the reconciliation was most satisfactory ; and as he saw Cuthbert sitting at the table, as strong and healthy as before the misfortune, and as he considered the name of Sir Charles completely white-washed in society, by his duel with Sir Philip Arundel, he dismissed all further thought about the ferocious crime which he committed. It was now passed without the sad consequences which might have followed — it was forgiven — it was already dwindling into very insignificant proportions — and was soon to be altogether forgotten.

After the pleasant customs of that time, when supper was ended, the music books were introduced — the viol and lute were brought ; — and an hour, or more, was delightfully spent to the health and refreshment of mind and body, in that familiar concert, where each person was expected to sing the appointed part at first sight. Among the permitted pleasures of our existence, those derived from the gift of sweet sounds, and from the divine art of musical com-

position, may be classed among the purest and most refined.

They sung a few of the best madrigals of Orlando Gibbons, and Bird's rich harmony — "My Mind to me a Kingdom is;" — and they closed with a flowing glee for five voices, from Gibbons, entitled "The Silver Swan." The summer parlour in which they sung had been found so warm that the casements were half open, and the moonlight streamed in, scarcely overpowered by the lamp, which stood upon the table, and but dimly illuminated the oaken wainscot and ceiling. Except a whispered word, to the one sitting next, on the richness of Bird's harmonies, or on the delicate and sweet style of Orlando Gibbons, a long and silent pause followed the evening's performance, and they seemed to be enjoying again in memory what they had just made vocal. Suddenly there stole upon them from among the trees, at a short distance, a simple and soft melody of a most tender expression. It was the music of a pipe or reed, but such as none of the party had ever heard before. The tones were various, —

now full and clear; now faint and exquisite; now died away into a charmed stillness; now, again, they were heard slow, chaste, and solemn, as if the burden of the air were some sacred hymn. At last, after ravishing the ears of the astonished party, who stood at the window, or leaned upon their chairs with mute attention, by breathing forth airs of strange harmony, which none could distinctly recognise, the invisible minstrel closed the magical prelude, in heavenly and melancholy notes of surpassing sweetness, with the favourite air of "Now, O now," by the famous Dowland, the well known friend of the immortal William Shakspeare. Not one of the party observed the sudden paleness and deep agitation of Katharine, while the sweet notes of this beautiful air were sounding in their ravished ears. All were silent, and most of them absorbed in still attention; and Katharine sat back in the shadow of the apartment, so that her countenance was hid.

"Methinks it is a spirit," said Jane Lambert, with a smile.

"Nay, if it be," observed Mistress Alice,

“it is a good one, and has been gently bred. — I am sure I felt quite sorry when the last air ceased; and as for poor Master Cuthbert, I never saw any man so affected by music before. — Do you not observe it, Katharine?”

“I cannot wonder, because I know that Dowland is a great favourite with him; and that air, played as it was, might affect a person less easily moved than Master Cuthbert.”

“Well, Kate,” said Sir Oliver, “after all, it is but some piping stroller, perhaps, that is trudging it to Coventry fair; but, what with moonshine and fancy, you are making an Orpheus of the vagabond,—and I dare to say he would be well pleased to pipe a good fat hen out of the fowl house.”

“Really, Sir Oliver,” said Jane Lambert, “you old gentlemen are very provoking:—you have a way of knocking down all castles in the air with a crab-stick; and if we do now and then get lifted off plain ground, you bring us down again with a vengeance. Now, even I, who am not very romantic, was painting to myself some disconsolate bard of noble presence, wandering about

in sad banishment from the lady of his love, and solacing his despair with the melody of this pipe, given him, I am sure, by a magician."

"Whoever he is," said Juxon, who with young Arthur had leaped from the window and ran to the wood, coming to the open casement a few minutes after, "he has certainly got the ring of Gyges; for there is not man or animal in that open beechery; and if any one had run forth we must have seen them in the close behind."

"It may be, Juxon, he is perched in a tree, like your true nightingale," said Sir Oliver.

"Nay, we looked up into the branches carefully, but could discern nothing: the birds at roost, though, had raised their heads from beneath their wings, to listen to the strange chorister. In faith, he is no common shepherd in clouted shoon, but a rare minstrel, such as poets feign Apollo. Hush! listen again."

Again, after a playful prelude, the invisible musician performed the sweet air to which the song of Ariel in the Tempest was always sung.

"Marry, Master Juxon," said Jane, "the

precious songster mocks your pains, and gives you fair challenge to renew your hunt ; but I think you might gather the night dew till cock-crow before you would find him."

Every one seemed spell-bound till the air was done, and Jane Lambert spoke ; but Juxon and Arthur now ran again to the beechery, and in a few minutes returned without better success than before.

" Well," said Jane Lambert, " we shall soon find out who it is that this dainty spirit is come to honour ; for if it be Sophy or me, we shall have him flying with us on a bat's back all the way to the Grange ; and if it be you, dear Kate, you will have more music than sleep to-night."

Katharine was spared all reply by Sir Oliver gravely saying, " that he remembered when he was a boy that beechery was said to be haunted, and that whenever the white lady appeared it boded evil to the family at Milverton." This old Philip had already mentioned to the servants, who stood grouped at the gate of the court-yard on the right, but none of whom had dared to venture down to the spot whence the music came, though they had seen all which passed.

Master Cuthbert ventured to observe, that the music was not like the wailing of a ghost, which came as a forerunner of grief; nor was it of such solemnity, that a spirit from heaven could take delight in it: and he doubted not that the minstrel was plain flesh and blood; that he had, probably, been arrested by the sounds of their little concert, had amused himself by responding to them with his own pleasant instrument, and had practised cleverly upon their curiosity by the nimbleness with which he had evaded their search. But Sir Oliver shook his head at this natural explanation of the mystery; and the Lamberts and Juxon, after putting their lips to a stirrup cup of spiced wine, took leave of their host, and the trampling of their horses soon died away in the distance.

CHAP. XII.

Why, alas ! and are you he ?
Be not yet those fancies changed ?

SIDNEY.

To Katharine there had been no mystery : she could not doubt that the invisible minstrel was her cousin Francis, and that he was again too near for her peace or his own.

Yet such is the sweet treachery of a loving heart, that she could not be sad to know, that one so dearly, though so hopelessly, attached to her, was perhaps within sight of the very window of her apartment, and standing upon some spot where they had formerly walked together in joy. Though resolved not to grant him more than one interview, and to dissuade him from seeking any future opportunities of intercourse, she could not but admit a natural feeling of de-

light, that she should once more, though but for a few brief moments, look upon him, and listen to his well remembered voice. In the solitude of her chamber she found that relief and freedom of thought which her spirit needed: her wakeful night was passed in reviewing former, and in shaping out future scenes; but of this last exercise of the mind she soon grew weary, for doubt hung over all her future prospects. It was about two hours after midnight, and the house was quite still, when Katharine, in a frame of mind that ill agreed with sleep and peace, arose, and wrapped in her night robe leaned from the casement of her chamber, and gazed out upon the fields and woods, and caught the sheen of the river as it glided beneath the holy moon. The scene was calm, the air serene, and her anxious spirit was soothed by contemplation. She remained long at the window; and as she was retiring turned her eyes to the left, where, beyond the Lime Walk, she could see the black shade of her favourite cedar near the fish-pond. In the moonlight near it she discerned the figure of a man walking slowly upon the grass. Her heart

beat quick in her bosom ; she leaned her brow against the wall : that surely was Francis. A projection of the building threw such a shadow over her window, that her figure could not be seen, and therefore she again looked forth and cast her eyes towards the cedar. The figure near paced slowly backwards and forwards, occasionally pausing for a minute or more, as if gazing at the house. Certainly it was Francis. Forbidden all access to the mansion by the angry prejudices of Sir Oliver, he had recourse to music to tell her of his return. They had often watched the moonbeams together from the terrace below ; they had often been sheltered together beneath the broad arms of that very cedar in the heats of noon, till, suddenly, as by surprise, they loved and after shunned each other, from the sad knowledge that the barriers to their union were many, were cold, and were impassable. As all these after-thoughts crossed her noble mind, she suffered herself to look upon her cousin where he kept his lonely vigil, with that deep interest which must ever be inseparable

from that being in whose heart we know that our image is enshrined and cherished.

When the morning star shone brightly out the figure of Francis suddenly disappeared. Katharine now withdrew from the casement; and, exhausted by the various emotions, which had filled and troubled her anxious bosom with apprehension and with delight, she threw herself on her bed without taking off her robe, and slept so very long and profoundly, that when she awoke she found Mistress Alice seated by her side, with a look of affectionate alarm upon her kind face, and her maid frightened and in tears. It was already high noon. Katharine, however, knew nothing of the lapse of time; and imagining she might be an hour later than usual, was raising herself up with some expression about her strange fit of sleepiness, when her aunt put her hand gently upon her, and bade her lie down again. "When Master Randal has seen you, my dear," she said, "you shall be undressed, and have your bed made, and be put to rest properly and with comfort. He is below, and has

been here this half hour, but he wished that your slumber should not be broken."

But the effort to rise had already shown Katharine the unwelcome truth — she was in a high fever: — her head ached, her lips were parched, her mouth was dry, her skin was burning.

The good doctor was instantly summoned; and having examined her case with very careful attention, directed that she should be confined to her bed, and that her chamber should be kept dark and still.

"It was a violent fever," he said, "which would probably, in another stage, take an intermittent form;" but evidently, from the doctor's manner, it was a case of danger, demanding great watchfulness and skilful treatment.

Promising Mistress Alice that his visits should be as frequent as possible, he returned to Warwick at speed, accompanied by a servant, who was to bring back the medicines prescribed.

The trouble of Sir Oliver almost amounted to terror. His mind was by no means superior to those fears which vulgar errors impose; and

as, in addition to the strange music of the evening before, he had that very morning seen a hare cross the high road just before his horse's feet, he augured no less a calamity than a fatal end to the sudden illness of his beloved daughter.

Cuthbert Noble, however, rose to the occasion; and though it is certain that no individual in the family felt a more tender affection and concern for Katharine Heywood than he did, yet he was enabled, by a wise sympathy, to compose the fears and animate the hopes of Sir Oliver, and indeed of an entire household; for a despondency fell upon all, which the most comfortable arguments of plain reason and sound religion did but imperfectly remove.

For three days the life of Katharine Heywood was, in truth, in very imminent danger, and the fever was of that malignant nature which defied all ordinary treatment: but as the doctor was a man of great decision and boldness in his practice, and, at the same time, one who committed all events with humility and simplicity to the will of God, he fought bravely with the

disease; and after the third night of patient watching and vigorous experiments, he subdued it so far that he could announce to Sir Oliver the safety of his daughter. The crisis was passed; but her weakness was great, and her recovery very gradual. For the first three days of her attack she was almost without consciousness; but though her head became light, and her mind was confused, she uttered nothing in her wanderings which attracted the particular notice of Mistress Alice, or any of her attendants, or in the least betrayed the secret of her heart.

Meanwhile Francis Heywood, in ignorance of the sad condition of his cousin Katharine, endured all the agony of a suspicion that he was at once neglected and scorned by her who had been the vision of his lonely hours of labour in a remote plantation, and who, as the very star of his destiny, had led him back again to the land in which she dwelt, as a land of promise. Liberty was his watchword; and it is true that when letters spoke so confidently of a civil war as inevitable, he obtained his father's permission

to return to England, that he might join his patriotic countrymen in their contention for the rights of civil and religious liberty. Nor was this a mere pretext for escape from the tame drudgery of colonial life, — the cause of freedom was sacred in his sight, and was precious to his heart. He came to draw the sword, and bare his bosom in the battle. He had a life to offer on the altar of duty, and he joyously brought the willing sacrifice; but yet there lay at the bottom of his heart one bright, one good hope. He might be lifted, by the fortunes of this war, to renown, to rank, to fortune; he might survive all its chances; he might see peace and happiness restored: — the present relations between himself and his wealthy uncle might be greatly altered; the old prejudices against him might at last give way, and the crowning reward of all his honours and his fortunes might be the hand of Katharine. This was his dream by day — this was his dream by night: — like some chaste and solemn star, seen brightly shining in solitary and calm glory at the extremity of a narrow and gloomy valley,

darkened by the shadows of lofty mountains, so the majestic loveliness of his cousin Katharine, irradiated by all her virtues, shone out beyond the cloudy path of blood and peril, as the blissful end and rest of all his labours.

He had not passed a night of such rapture since he last parted from his cousin as that on which he reached Milverton, and the whole of which he mused away within sight of the mansion that contained the noble object of his attachment.

Although he was fully persuaded that he should be recognised by Katharine as the wandering musician, yet he was in doubt whether she would afford him an immediate opportunity of meeting her alone; therefore he prepared an earnest appeal to her, in characters which, though enigmatical to others, would, he well knew, be readily understood by herself. The moon shone that night with so clear a brightness, that he had no sort of difficulty in executing his design. He made a slight fancy sketch, on a small piece of paper, of a setting sun; he introduced the cedar in the fore-ground, and in

one corner he wrote, in a small hand, the Italian word "implora:" on the back of this paper he faintly sketched a dial-plate, the shadow touching the figure of seven in the evening. He placed this between the leaves of a copy of Spenser's "Fairy Queen," which he found upon the seat, and which he remembered to have been the garden companion of his fair cousin in former days. When, on the following evening, the sun had set, and the silver light of the moon touched all objects with the hues of peace, Francis repaired to the appointed spot with eager steps, and in confident hope that he should once more behold her for whom he had all that tender reverence which angelic purity could alone inspire. He seated himself beneath the well-known tree, and saw with pleasure that the book had been taken away. Katharine, then, had received his "implora," and she would not — she could not — disappoint him, and deny his prayer. The long delay of her coming perplexed him; and, after an hour of anxious waiting, every succeeding minute was insupportably slow, and weighty with sadness. He

left and resumed his seat with restless discomposure; he paced the neighbouring bank; he went into the Lime Walk, to watch for the first glimpse of her distant form; at last, as he was approaching the cedar tree, with his eyes bent on the ground, he for the first time observed a fragment of paper lying near the trunk:—he took it up—it was a part of his note; it had been torn in halves, and trodden in the dust; it was divided at the very word “implora.” The change of his feeling was, for the moment, terrible. All that he had read or heard of the pride, the caprice, and inconstancy of woman, rushed upon his memory to strengthen his black suspicions, and inflame his sudden indignation. But this rage was very soon exhausted, and was succeeded by a sorrow weak as that of infants. He did not weep,—but a few hot tears slowly gathered at long intervals, and fell heavily on the earth. And then he railed upon himself, and defended her neglect of him.

“It was that accursed music: she ever scorned such fanciful and romantic folly:—how dared I to expect that she, whose words

and ways are open as the clear sunshine of noon, should come in the shadows of evening, with silent footsteps, to a secret meeting with such an outcast as me — one who may not ring the bell of his kinsman's gate with better hope than that of rude dismissal? It is all well, Katharine, and yet I loved you loyally, and still will love you: of that privilege none can rob me. Like yon planet above me, you are a common blessing, for which the comforted pilgrim in this thorny wilderness glances his eye upward to the bounteous heavens, and thanks his God."

Another, but a gloomier, vigil in the grounds of Milverton was thus passed by Francis; and again, when the dawn approached, he withdrew, and retired to a small hostelry in the suburbs of Warwick, where for his better concealment he had taken up his lodging. Here, however, some relief, if such it could be called, was awaiting him; for as he lay reposing on his bed, tired, yet unable to sleep, he overheard the following dialogue between his hostess and a passer by: —

“Hast thou heard the bad news from Milverton, dame?” said the latter.

“No; I have not seen my girl a week come to-morrow.”

“Eh, dear, don’t you be frightened for your Ruth, but they’ve got the fever there quite bad. Master Randal, the ’pothecary, was over there three times yesterday, and all last night.”

“Lord, goody, what shall I do? I must go: my poor dear child is so delicate for taking of fever, she will be sure to catch it. Who is it that ha got it? is it the old gentleman, or Mistress Alice?”

“No, God be merciful to her, ’t is that dear, kind, blessed young lady, Mistress Katharine; and they are all in a great take on about her; for they say that the very night before she was took bad, her poor dear mother’s ghost was seen on the terrace by moonlight, and sung beautiful, and for all every body was so frightened, yet they say it was like as if an angel had come down out of heaven; and they

say, it is a sure sign that Mistress Katharine will die, and go happy."

There is nothing more strange than the peculiar character of the selfishness of love—but it is ever the same. Francis felt a deep, a true, an anxious concern for the illness of Katharine: he was keenly afflicted with self-reproach at the thought that she might perhaps have been so disturbed by his sudden and strange announcement of his return as to have been made nervous and unwell. But this sorrow, ay, and the very apprehension of her death, (which feeling, however, he did not share,) would have been more endurable than the thought that he was forgotten, neglected, and scorned by one whom his soul held dear. However, he was, in his own judgment, persuaded that her illness, and all the circumstances attending it, were much exaggerated by those superstitious fears of the household, for which he could himself so very easily account. Descending, therefore, from his chamber, while the old gossips were continuing their talk, he took occasion, as soon as her neighbour had

passed on, to urge his hostess to lose no time in going to inquire after her daughter; observing that he had often heard of the family at Milverton, and could not but feel a hope that the lady of whom they spoke would soon recover.

“Precious angel,” said the old woman: “I don’t know why we should wish it, I am sure, except it be for the sake of others; for their was never a body fitter for heaven than that dear young lady.”

It was with keen anguish that, upon the return of his poor hostess in the afternoon, he learned that the life of Katharine was really in danger. At sunset he took his cloak, and passed the night in a position near the wood, from whence he could command the curtained window of the sufferer, and watch the dim light within, and those gloomy shadows which, as nurse or attendant slowly crossed the chamber, occasionally obscured it.

His was a mind in which hope was ever anticipating enjoyment, or fear meeting and realising the dreaded misfortune. Now, therefore, with the lamp of a sick room burning faint be-

fore him, and with scenery around all silvery and spiritual, lying hushed and calm in a silence solemn as the grave, and yet sweet and peaceful as that of heaven, he resigned himself to the belief that Katharine was dying, or, rather, was departing to the abode of blessed spirits. He grew reconciled to the thought. No clouds of terror darkened it; and, as her pale image arose distinctly before his mind's eye, he became elevated with the sentiment of her sure and celestial happiness; and there was a feeling of ecstasy in the idea that he might cherish his love for her, as a sacred thing, for ever.

Again, on the following night, he lay enfolded in his cloak, or leaned against a distant tree, or paced like a sentinel his lonely round, with his eyes fixed on the light in Katharine's chamber, and his meditations were sweet. But how tenderly he had been rocked in the cradle of sorrow, and how willingly he had allowed the true state of his own heart to be hidden from himself by fancied consolations, was evident, when, on returning from his watch upon the third morning, he learned from his hostess that the doctor had come

home very early, and said, that the dear lady was out of danger. He had just command enough over his feelings not to betray to her that he took a private and deep interest in her intelligence; but, rushing up to his room, his hopes, his fears, his grief, his joy, his gratitude, gushed forth from his pent-up bosom in a flood of silent tears. He wept upon his knees.

CHAP. XIII.

What man was he talked with you ?

Much Ado about Nothing.

It was not till the crisis of danger was already past that the illness of Katharine became known at Bolton Grange, or at Old Beech.

Jane Lambert was no sooner apprised of it than she hastened to her friend, and insisted, with all the devotion and tenderness of a sister, on being permitted to divide with Mistress Alice the duties of her present charge.

Katharine loved Jane, and was comforted to have her seated near her, and was soothed by her affection: it was evident, however, to the latter, that something weighed heavily upon the spirits of her friend, and that the feelings of hope and the clear promise of recovery, did not impart to her all the gratitude and cheerfulness

which might be naturally expected in the pleasant dawn of convalescence.

She had not been many days at Milverton when an incident occurred which discovered the cause of her anxiety.

As Jane was looking from the window in the afternoon, and remarking to Katharine on the beautiful effect of the low autumn lights, she observed the figure of a man with folded arms leaning near a tree in the beechery, and she playfully exclaimed, "That must certainly be the musical ghost, which played so sweetly, and brought us all such bad luck, and frightened every body in Milverton House but your dear self, and the grave Master Cuthbert: — how I should like to have the treacherous creature caught.

"Dear lady," said Katharine's maid, "how can you talk so boldly? — why nobody can catch a spirit. It is only air."

"I have a notion, good lass," replied Jane, "that it is very proper flesh and blood, and if I were a man, and not a maid, would try my speed with it, and bring it to parley. I should like to

hear the voice of it, or see its face, and tell it of all the mischief it has done."

"Well-a-day! what a heart you have, lady! There is not one in the kitchen but stout Richard would venture that; and though he could not find any thing the other day when he followed it, he's obstinate as a mule, and says it's no ghost, but a young gallant that's under hiding at my mother's, in Warwick Liberties; but there is nobody thinks with him at Milverton."

"Well, then, I am of Richard's way of thinking, in part:—it is a tall man; but whether young, and whether under hiding, I know not."

"Why, there is a gentleman under hiding at my mother's, sure enough, and one that knows my lady, as she says, and was quite glad when he heard that she first began to mend."

"Ruth," said Katharine, raising her head from the pillow, "if you will go and make me some fresh barley water, I think I shall like it better than this fever drink." The wish was no sooner expressed than her maid vanished to do her bidding, and Katharine and her friend Jane were left by themselves.

“Jane,” said the invalid, “come and sit by me: I have something to tell you, and I have to ask of you a very strange favour. I desired to relieve my heart of its burden, but have hitherto delayed it. You know, Jane, that I love you, and that I have confidence in your attachment to me; but if it were not for my present helplessness, which compels me to engage your service as a true friend, whose good sense and firm principles I can safely trust, the subject which I am about to speak of would never have passed my lips even to you. The gentleman of whom they speak is my cousin Francis. He it was who so perplexed and alarmed the family with his mysterious music, and who still, I fear, haunts the same spot in silence and anxiety.”

“Your cousin Francis!—why, dear Kate, I thought he was in America!”

“And I myself thought so until the night when he made his return known to me in tones which I could not mistake, and the meaning of which I but too well understood.”

“I have been long aware, Katharine, that he loved you.”

“You have, I believe, already discerned it. Alas ! it is true — fatally for his own happiness and for mine ; — but, Jane, have you courage for the task which I would impose upon you ?”

“Yes, Kate : you can ask me nothing too hard for me, if I can only feel that I do what may comfort you.”

“Well, Jane, you must contrive to see my cousin Francis ; to deliver to him a note from me with your own hands, and to urge his immediate departure from this neighbourhood. Now, love, bring me those small tablets and paper, and support me while I write the few words which I would say.”

It was a sight for pity to see that noble damsel, her back propped by pillows, and the arm of her young friend tenderly supporting her, trace in silence and with a nervous hand the few lines which were to banish from the neighbourhood of Milverton her worthy and devoted lover.

The task was soon done ; and with the care as of a mother Jane Lambert again arranged the pillows for the aching head of Katharine ; and

the pale sufferer sunk back exhausted into the recumbent posture, and heaved a sigh so sad, that the eyes of Jane filled with thick tears. She averted her head to wipe them away, that they might not distress her friend, and putting the unsealed billet in her bosom, left the chamber with a thoughtful step, to do her very delicate and difficult office. She went to her own room, and taking a dark mantle with a hood, such as was the common church-going and street costume of women of the respectable middle classes of that period, she threw it across her arm, and walked through the Lime Walk, and by the fish ponds, to a small gate at the farther end of the grounds, by which she could gain a footpath that led across the fields to Warwick. She had no sooner passed the gate than she put on her cloak, and passing the hood over her head, that she might muffle and conceal her features, if she met any one, she proceeded towards the city. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the sky was lowering and cloudy. She was anxious about her strange mission, and settling in her mind what she should do when she reached the

hostelry, whither she was now bending her steps, and how she should contrive the interview with Francis, when the sound of steps very closely following suddenly startled her: the very object of her search had overtaken her, and was already at her side. At first, however, she was not aware of this, although the circumstance of this passenger being muffled, as closely as herself, awakened her suspicions of the truth, and forbade the alarm she would otherwise have felt at finding herself in a very lonely part of the pathway in such company. He did not stop when he overtook her, but went a few steps onward, as if to re-assure her before he ventured to speak. He crossed a stile and walked some paces without turning his head, till she had also crossed it; when loitering a little, till she was close to him, he stepped aside from the path, and gently put a question that very directly introduced them to each other, and gave Jane the ready opportunity of delivering her note, and fulfilling the further wishes of her dear Katharine.

“You are from Milverton House, as I think, damsel?”

"Even so, master," replied Jane.

"Is the noble young mistress better to-day?"

"I thank God she is; but it will be long ere she be quite well again."

"She is out of all pain, I hope?"

"Yes, she hath no bodily pain, save that which arises from weakness; and for such pain of mind as disquiets her it may be, in great part, removed by yourself, Master Francis."

Thus saying, she threw back her hood, and Francis, who had before discovered his own features, recognised those of Jane Lambert. "I bear you a note from your cousin Katharine," she added, as he started at her utterance of his name. She drew it forth from her bosom, and placed it in his hand. He turned from her that he might read it without observation; but Jane could see by his action that he kissed it, and pressed it to his heart. With a glance it was perused, and then again and again; and with a bent head and staggering step he moved a few paces from Jane, and spoke in tones of anguish to himself words which she could not distinguish. At last, collecting himself, he re-

turned towards the fair messenger of his Katharine, with a manly composure, and said, "Tell my beloved cousin that I will obey; that her wish is as a law to me: how could she dream that I would suffer the words of any one to outweigh her own?—but, she tells me that you are her devoted and faithful friend, and that to you I may safely intrust the object of my return, and the news of my father. There is, indeed, one subject on which she forbids me to speak even to herself; therefore my answer may be brief enough. My father is well:—all her kinsfolk in the Plantations are well, and free, and happy. For the object of my sudden return—it is the love of my country—a love that will not accept a divided heart; and yet the other love that lay enshrined beside it, was pure, was noble, was worthy such alliance, has filled my thoughts by day, has blessed the visions of my lonely nights. Tell Katharine she hath used me hardly—no, no, do not tell her that—not hardly—say that she bids me do something I cannot do—I am not of her order—forget her I never can—she is with me wherever I go—

in all things that I do I think of her — and still must, if I would have fair and noble thoughts to bear me company.”

“Such things, Master Francis, I may not carry to her ear. There is about her a reserve so maidenly and grave, she would chide her own messenger for proving so unfaithful; — but I may tell her that your father is well; that loyalty hath brought you home; and that you will quit these parts instantly — for that it is, methinks, she most earnestly requests of you.”

“Even so: on that she is most urgent — cruel Katharine.”

“Say, rather, wise, dutiful, loyal Katharine.”

“Loyal, loyal! — that is a word of many imports. I, too, am loyal, and will learn to love the word: — mind you tell her that I am loyal,”

“Can I truly tell her so?”

“Yes, truly: — but enough of this, fair girl, — go back to her who sent thee — wait, you are her friend — you nurse her — come, let me look into thine eyes — give me thy hand — on my knees I kiss it — her cheek is pale — I know it is — it must be — go touch it

with thy hand, and offer there the chaste cold homage of my sorrow. You see that I am sad, lady—go—bless you—you are weeping:—how is this, girl?—be not so childish—a friend of Katharine's should not be weak—I, you see, am calm and strong—my hand does not tremble—and these eyes are dry—methinks my heart is frozen—tell her so.”

Jane Lambert stood fixed as a statue while he thus spoke; and as she watched him walking fast away, she felt, for the first time in her life, what it must be to have a lover, and to be the supreme object of such a man's affection. Her cheek was stained with tears—her face flushed with agitation—her whole air disordered and absent. She followed with her eyes the tall figure of Francis, till a turn in the pathway hid him from her view, and then walked slowly back to Milverton. .

In the very first field she met George Juxon, and it was evident to her, from his manner, as he stopped and spoke to her, that he must have witnessed, at least, the close of her interview with Francis. There was a surprise in his look,

and something of embarrassment, as he shook her by the hand, and asked if she was well; but he did not seem to expect any particular reply, nor indeed did he offer to return with her to the house, though she was but too conscious that her faintness and discomposure might have naturally invited such an attention. Observing, coldly, that he had some business at a builder's yard in Warwick, but that he should return to sup and sleep at Milverton, he leisurely pursued his path to the city.

Jane's heart gave way to the multitude of troublous and perplexing thoughts which now beset her; and leaning near a friendly tree, she found a momentary relief in a passionate flood of warm tears.

Her trial was strange. The feelings which had been excited were altogether new to her; and the effect of the interview with Katharine's devoted cousin, combined with the cross and perplexing incident of her meeting with Juxon so immediately after, as to make it certain that he had seen her part from Francis Heywood, had very naturally overcome the ordinary cour-

age and the cheerful composure of her character.

She had witnessed, in the agitated Francis, the emotions of love. The sentiment, which thus shook him, she had never yet inspired — she had never felt for any one. Such love had been to her the poet's fable; but it would never again be so deemed of by her; — and something that made her heart throb and ache within her told truly the want of that heart, and unsealed a fountain of affection ready to overflow upon any being in whom she might be fortunate enough to find the noble qualities of a manly heart, and the gentle ways and genuine fervours of an ardent lover.

It was a cruel thought that she must now be subject to suspicions, if not of lightness, yet of a secret attachment and stolen interviews with the object of it. Nor was the oppression of this thought at all weakened by the reflection that George Juxon, the very man whose good opinion she most valued, had seen her in a situation, and under circumstances, which he could not by any possibility interpret truly, and which her duty

to Katharine forbade her to explain, however deeply her own character or happiness might suffer. In one short hour she had gathered an experience that filled her with wonder, and had incurred a suspicion that subjected her to censure and threatened her with misery. The consciousness of innocence could not restore to her the respect of Juxon, nor exempt her from the severe penalties with which the levity and imprudence of the thoughtless of her own sex are ever silently visited by the other, when some painful discovery of a woman's guile chills and revolts them.

However in her case, the judgment of Juxon had not been harsh; but, of course, when he saw a man upon his knees before her — when he considered the loneliness of their place of interview — the cloaks evidently worn for disguise — and the agitated and discomposed appearance of Jane Lambert — he, at once, decided that she was betrothed to a lover, whom for fear or for shame she dared not openly avow.

He had truly liked Jane, for her spirit, her sense, and, above all, for her devotion to Katha-

rine Heywood; and his liking might soon have grown to a manly love,—but the flow of his admiration was now suddenly checked and frozen, and he whistled “Woman’s a Riddle” all the way to Warwick and back again.

CHAP. XIV.

O how full of briars is this working-day world !

As you Like it.

As soon as the affectionate Jane had entirely recovered her self-possession, she left her chamber, and repaired to Katharine. It was the dark evening hour of autumn, and there was no light in the room of the invalid but that emitted from the glowing embers on the hearth. Jane seated herself by the bedside, and, taking the hand of Katharine, gently pressed it, and said, —

“ My dear Kate, I have done all that you wished ; and I have sped well.”

“ You have, then, seen Francis ? ”

“ Yes ; I put your note into his own hands. He was much affected ; but he promised obedience to your wishes at once.”

Katharine gave a sigh, and turned her face to the wall. There was a short pause of silence before Jane proceeded : —

“ He bade me tell you that his father and your kinsfolk in America are well ; and that the immediate object of his return is the love of his country.”

“ Ah, Jane ! I know what that means. I remember too well all the warm and bitter words that passed between my father and his on that subject. Would he had stayed in the peaceful Plantations ! The ocean between us was not a wider separation than the gulf that divides party from party at home ; besides, Jane, he is deluded : they will play upon his generous nature, — they will make a traitor of him. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Would he had stayed abroad !”

“ I must not forget, Katharine, to tell you that he strictly charged me to say that he was loyal. ‘It is a word,’ said he, ‘of many imports :’ — mind you tell her that I am loyal.’ — No, dear Katharine, his is no traitor’s heart : he

may be on the wrong side of the quarrel, but he is the King's true subject at the bottom."

"Hush! Jane; whisper not these dangerous words,—there is deceit in them. The soul's enemy finds each of us treacherous enough in will, and crooked enough in judgment, without the weak and indulgent folly of our friends. Be true to me,—be English, Jane:—I love you passing well."

Jane kissed her pale cheek; and there was another pause. At last Katharine said, in a very low voice,—

"How was Cousin Francis looking? Is he in health?"

"His complexion is more brown, and he has less colour than formerly; his countenance, too, is very grave—almost sad; yet there is a steady fire in his eyes; and he is as graceful and as strong as ever. But for his late care and watching, I should say he was better in health than when he left Milverton for America."

"He was not hurt at my note, I hope,—was he, Jane? Speak truly."

"Not hurt; but disappointed, certainly."

However, he is noble and sensible, and saw that it was right."

"You think so."

"I am sure of it, by his manner."

"Do you think he will go away directly?"

"Yes; perhaps he is already gone. I could see in the firm and resolute step with which he walked away from me that his decision was taken."

"Then it was not at the hostelry that you saw him? Where did you meet him?"

Jane now detailed, in part, the circumstances of their interview, as already related; suppressing all mention of the passionate words and gestures of Francis, and any notice of her having been seen in his company by Juxon. It had been the first intention of Jane to proceed to the house of Ruth's mother, on whose protection she could depend, and to wait there till Francis, who she doubted not was the lodger spoken of, should return thither; for, before Jane left Milverton House, Francis had already disappeared from the Beechery. It would be easy to invent some plausible excuse to Ruth's

mother for her visit to Warwick ; and, having contrived her interview with Francis as if by accident, to return to Milverton, if belated till dusk, under the old woman's escort. But this plan was rendered unnecessary by the circumstance of Francis overtaking Jane upon her way to the city.

" My dear affectionate girl," said Katharine to her sweet friend, " how much, how very much, I thank you : — kiss me, dear, and leave me to compose myself, if I can, to sleep."

But sleep was impossible in her frame of mind at that moment : — it was solitude she needed, that she might meditate and weep alone. However, there was a high sound principle ever at work in her bosom ; so that a little solitary and prayerful reflection never failed to restore the calmness of her mind, and the strength of her resolutions.

The spirit of Jane Lambert was of another sort ; and, restored to the privacy of her own chamber, she gave a free vent to the sorrow and anxiety which she had so courageously suppressed before Katharine.

When she descended to the hall to supper, and all the party were assembled, she remarked or fancied that George Juxon expressly avoided seating himself near her ; and, after asking her one or two questions about the progress of Katharine's recovery, he addressed her no more.

Her pride was a little wounded to observe that he was in high and careless spirits, and became quite the life of the table. Cuthbert, too, was, for him, unusually cheerful. Sir Oliver seemed in great good humour ; and the boy Arthur was radiant with delightful and joyous anticipations of the new world, which an entrance at Oxford would open before him. Literary and characteristic anecdotes of distinguished and eccentric scholars of both universities, in times past as well as present, enlivened the social meal ; and though but a very thin partition separated the subjects of university discipline from those of church polity and state government, neither were introduced that evening.

Jane thought that she had never before discerned so clearly the fine qualities of Juxon : —

his sound but charitable judgment, his accurate memory, the kindliness of his nature, and the playfulness of his stories, at once charmed and depressed her. She wished to leave the table; yet still she lingered on, listening and irresolute; and the proposal to retire was first made by Mistress Alice.

An avowed contempt for the opinion of the many is not inconsistent with a very earnest and anxious regard for the judgment of the few whom we chance to admire and esteem. The dear, high-spirited girl, who thought herself above the censure of the world, and indifferent to its voice, was now, though clear from the slightest reproach of conscience, agonised with apprehensions lest she should have forfeited the respect of George Juxon. When, at a later hour, the household was assembled for the evening service, and the prayers were reverently read by Juxon, her heart beat in her bosom so quick and loud as to be audible to Cuthbert Noble, who kneeled near her. As soon as they rose, he regarded her with a look of such compassionate inquiry, that Jane, fearing he was

about to question her concerning her health, and not daring to trust herself with a reply, abruptly left the apartment.

Juxon had himself observed her flushed cheek and her disturbed manners, and began to entertain very serious alarm for her. How far his duty as a friend, and, above all, as a Christian minister, authorised him to seek acquaintance with the nature and extent of those secret engagements of Jane Lambert, which he could not but fear, from her evident agitation, were at variance with plain principle and prudence, it was not easy for him to resolve. He truly liked her frank, generous, and inartificial character. He knew full well that in her brother she had neither a kind, a careful, or a wise guardian. It was surely wrong to stand upon the brink of a whirlpool, and see any one drawn down to ruin, whom it was in our power, if not to save, at least to admonish of the danger. His mind instantly reverted to the noble Katharine as the proper channel through which his manly and benevolent warnings might be safely conveyed with

delicacy and effect. But many days might yet elapse ere the opportunity of a conversation with Katharine might occur; for she was confined not only to her chamber, but to her bed. Should he venture to hint his fears to herself? Yes: if she was the character he yet hoped to find her, it would be taken well; if not, it would matter very little in what light she viewed his disinterested service.

On the following morning, soon after breakfast, he saw Jane Lambert by herself in the Lime Walk, and he joined her.

She looked surprised and embarrassed; and he was not without a fear that his presence at that moment was inconvenient and irksome, and very possibly prevented her going forth to an interview with her lover in the very same fields where he had met her the evening before.

However, from the very fear he took courage; and, after the common salutations and usual words about the garden and the weather had passed, he broke the subject thus:—

“ Mistress Jane, you are too little acquainted

with the world for your own happiness, or rather, for your security, — may a friend say this without offending you ? ”

“ A friend may say any thing to me, Master Juxon, that a damsel may not blush to hear.”

“ I understand you — I must say no more — and yet I meant you well.”

“ But good intentions do often tread upon the foot just where it is most tender.”

“ Well, lady, enough : I will spare your maiden blushes ; only remember, of our sex, that he doth always act most openly who is most loyal.”

“ Loyal ! Master Juxon, what mean you ? Did you then so far forget yourself as to follow and trace out the gentleman whom you last evening stood watching as he parted from me ? — I do not understand you.”

“ Mistress Jane, you should have known me better ; — so far from watching your interview with the strange gentleman with whom I saw you, it was to avoid intrusion that I waited in the adjoining close till you parted from him, and would have gone back again altogether, but

for the great circuit and the business which I had in Warwick."

"You saw us part, then?"

"Yes, to my wonder, and to my sorrow that my eyes had caught an action meant only for your own. Lady, forgive the word; but at lovers' oaths forget not that Cupid laughs: — may Jane Lambert never be won by any suitor who does not openly woo her!"

"Amen to your kind wish, Master Juxon — so be it: — I know what you think, and am sorry, but I cannot help it; — however, you are not my father confessor, nor do I ever wish to have one."

"True, lady; but though not your confessor, I am your friend, your true and bold friend, or I should never have dared to utter what I have done. I can have no object in these hints but your best and highest interest: that which I have noticed to yourself I shall never mention to any other, except, perhaps, to Katharine Heywood, from whose lips whatever falls is wise and noble."

“O ! not to her — name not this idle matter to her. Promise me, Juxon, that you will not breathe a syllable about it to her. I shall be more unhappy if you do than I am already.”

“Alas ! you are then unhappy, and would shun the best help and consolation which friendship would provide for you. No, this I cannot promise ; on the contrary, I am only confirmed in the propriety of my intention.”

“Well, I implore you again, and earnestly, not to speak upon this subject to Katharine. As you value my peace of mind, be silent upon it to all : there is a mystery about it I may not unfold. I know that appearances are against me : I am sorry for your hard thoughts, but I must bear them. I could wish to explain these cross circumstances to you, but am not free to do so without violating a sacred duty. Promise me that you will meet my wish.” Thus saying, she put her hand upon his arm, and looked into his face with wet and beseeching eyes. “Juxon, you have always been plain and true, and friendly to me ; and though I and my per-

plexities ill deserve your interest or care, promise me that you will not name them to dear Katharine."

For a moment Juxon was affected by the wild earnestness of her manner; and he thought he had never seen more heart or feeling in the expression of a human countenance than in the flushed face of Jane Lambert.

"Well, Mistress Jane, you are so urgent, that I must promise to obey your will; but it grieves me to see you thus sadly troubled. May God help you, and guide you, and guard you, and keep you from evil, that it may not grieve you! Your secret is safe with me."

"And shall I lose your friendship?"

"No, lady, never: would only that it may have worth sufficient in your eyes to be used aright!"

"Believe me, I shall never forget it, and I will never do aught to forfeit such a treasure;" — so saying, she hurried away, with tears in her eyes, and left him absorbed in a state of feeling which cannot be described.

The more he thought of what he had wit-

nessed the evening before, and the more he considered the conversation which had just passed, the more satisfied he was that Jane Lambert was secretly betrothed to some one whom she dared not openly acknowledge as her lover. It was also plain, that, for some powerful reason, she had not confided the secret of this attachment even to Katharine, who was her bosom friend. He had comfort in remembering that nothing could be more respectful than the action of the stranger, when he kissed her hand at parting; and combining this with her own honest looks and proud though mysterious expressions, he was satisfied that, up to the present moment, she had taken no irrevocable step. There was, moreover, a warm strength in her last words, that assured him his friendly cautions were not thrown away, and that his motives were not misinterpreted. Upon the whole, he was justified, to his own mind, in what he had done; and his thoughts rested upon the character of Jane with greater interest than it had ever before excited in him.

“How very generous and devoted would be

the love of such a girl," said he to himself: "what a proud spirit, what an affectionate heart, she has; what a fire there is in her fine eyes — I never before saw her look half so beautiful: — it is clear that they have been lighted up by love: — well, God grant that the man of her choice may be worthy of it!"

He now sauntered slowly back to the house; and entering the library, found Cuthbert Noble sitting alone, and making extracts from an old folio volume.

"You see," said the young tutor, "I am making preparations for my departure from Milverton; but thus I may innocently suck honey from the hives of Sir Oliver, without robbing him, or those who come after him, of the smallest portion of such sweets as they contain."

"And what may be your study?" said Juxon, as he came up to the table, and looked over him.

"A curious work," replied Cuthbert, "containing the most remarkable pieces of John Huss, together with his life — imprinted in the last century at Augsburg."

"Friend Cuthbert, you are too constant in these serious and solemn studies and speculations."

"Master Juxon," answered the pale youth, "they are every thing or they are nothing."

"Verily, for my part I think divine truth is as clear and glorious as the sun in the firmament; and to warm ourselves, and to walk in the light of it, is better wisdom than to read so many commentaries and discourses upon it."

"May we not sometimes lie indolently warming ourselves by a fire of our own, and fancy it as comfortable as basking in the sun? Walking in the light is no such easy matter; and in my case I find that the words, and, above all, the examples, of those who have earnestly contended for the truth, as so many outstretched and helping hands to assist me in climbing the hill."

"What hill?"

"The high hill, Master Juxon, where the reformers and martyrs of past times have left the print of their blessed footsteps."

"Cuthbert, I see that you are in earnest, that you are sincere; but you are on a road beset by

enemies, to the full as dangerous as those on any other. Pride may be waiting to assail you, — spiritual pride, the worst of all enemies: you want to do something; you would unlock heaven's gates by some great performance: — remember its arches are so low that none can enter them who crawl not on their knees: — the little child's is the appointed stature for all believers."

"That, indeed, is true — it is a solemn truth; but there are beasts to be fought with, Juxon, and the stern combat is at hand. It is upon this I think by day, on this I dream by night."

"So much the worse: you are commanded, in many senses, to 'take no thought for the morrow;' and in none is it more your duty to obey the precept than in waiting the events of the coming day in quietness and in confidence: you conjure up shadows that you may fight with them."

"Nay, but you wrong my judgment: — to you they may so seem; but my eye can see the black and dismal realities beyond, which reflect these shadows."

“ Well, Cuthbert, it is vain to talk with you on these subjects:—on all others you are so clear and reasonable, that I shall always remember our intercourse with pleasure. I hear that there is a new arrangement, and that you do not wait to accompany Arthur to Oxford; but that you leave Milverton next week, therefore, very probably, I shall not see you again till your departure. Farewell, friend: my best and warmest wishes for your happiness will always accompany you. I shall ever be happy to hear of or from you, and be delighted to meet you again.”

With these words he put out his hand to Cuthbert, who grasped it eagerly, and struggled for a reply in vain.

The parting had taken him totally by surprise:—the thought of all Juxon’s friendly and kind services, of all his frank and endearing qualities, came up, with a rush before his fancy, and choked his utterance. The strong pressure of Cuthbert’s hand, and the slowness with which he released that of Juxon, told the latter all that he would have said; and, as the door closed be-

hind his departing friend, Cuthbert sank back into his seat, and, resting his head with hidden face upon the table, remained for several minutes silent and motionless.

CHAP. XV.

Religious contention is the devil's harvest.

Old Proverb.

To every member of the family at Milverton House Cuthbert had said farewell, when he retired to his chamber on the night before the morning fixed for his departure. He had taken leave of Mistress Katharine, in the presence of her aunt Alice and Jane Lambert, with a grave self-command which had surprised himself; and, as he left her room, he lifted his heart to Heaven in thanksgiving for the help of that strength which he had so earnestly implored in the privacy of his closet.

But when he was alone for the last wakeful vigil in the apartment in which he had passed so many a sleepless night the image of Katharine looked in upon his solitude, and, for a time, re-asserted all its power over his heart.

He had just parted, and, probably for ever, with her who had been to him, for many months, the angel of the scene. These months, though now short as hours to look back upon, had gathered into their brief and silvery revolutions much of that soft and essential happiness of his affections which he knew could never return again. Nevertheless, it was not in the power of separation or of hopelessness to destroy the memory of that sweet season of his youth; and he was content to accept that as all the bliss of its kind which the fortunes of his life and the new aims of his being, would permit him to enjoy.

“Here, and for ever,” said Cuthbert, speaking to himself aloud, “I forswear the weaknesses of love: life has rugged paths that are better trod by single men;—such a path is now shaping for me and for many. In the labour of establishing a people’s rights I shall find a sense of peace; and when the call of duty is obeyed, contentment is the golden fruit with which conscience herself presents us.”

There is no process of the mind more com-

mon than that by which a man, while sore at heart by the thought of some desirable but unattainable good, turns away from the painful consideration of his own sorrows, and erects himself into the zealous friend of suffering humanity, and the ardent reformer of social evils.

What curious springs in the world's clockwork are sorrow and disappointment ! How many wheels are set in motion by their secret action, and what different results from those at which men aim are produced by their conduct ! Here they strike for freedom, and elevate a despot — there they trample for the oppressor, and, lo ! a seed of armed patriots is sown beneath their horse's feet.

The idea of seeking the society of those among his friends whose minds were full of the stirring themes now daily suggested by political events was hailed as a relief and a consolation.

Absorbed in musings, Cuthbert watched away the night, and obtained only a short and broken slumber towards the morning.

It has been before observed, that to the language of love from the lips of Cuthbert Mistress

Katharine never would have listened, and could not have responded.

Katharine Heywood had only done what thousands have done before her, and are continually doing in the intercourse of life. She had manifested her own sweet nature in a ready and gentle appreciation of those qualities in the shy and humble student, which, wherever they are found, are worthy of regard.

Indeed, during the residence of Cuthbert at Milverton, as the tutor to her cousin, she had largely shared the benefit of his instructions. He had imparted new pleasures to her mind, had purified her taste, enlarged her conceptions, and elevated her thoughts.

These services she had repaid, in the character of mistress of her father's mansion, by studiously throwing the grace of her protection over the retiring scholar; but the smile of a queenly woman is a perilous shelter, and does oftentimes blight the happiness of those whom it was most innocently designed to cheer and to defend.

It had been arranged that Cuthbert should depart before eight in the morning. By that

hour his horse was already saddled in the stable, and the boy Arthur was in the stable-yard watching minutely all the preparations for the journey. The strapping on of the vallise, and of the holsters especially moved him on the present occasion, although he had seen the very same thing done a hundred times for others without curiosity or disquiet. What from the liveliness of his fancy, and the affectionateness of his disposition, the images of lonely ways and evil robbers made him fetch his breath quicker than usual. The good tempered groom, perceiving this by the youth's questions, began to allay his fears by saying, that "nobody would ever let or hinder a poor scholar like Master Cuthbert, and, besides that, God took care of all good persons; so there was no ill chance for such an one, but that he would go and come as safe as the King's own majesty;" which was the simple groom's notion of the most perfect security on earth.

Meanwhile Cuthbert himself was taking a last melancholy gaze at the gallery, the hall, the summer and winter parlour, and the various

objects of interest which they contained. The pictures, the books, the organ, the virginals, the lute, were all most intimately associated in his mind with her, whom to have seen and known was of itself a blessing.

In vain the grey-haired butler, Philip, pressed him to partake of breakfast, and cautioned him against a weary way and an empty stomach. He pecked like a sick bird at the substantial venison pasty, and sipped at the warm tankard with a word the while now to the old domestic, and now to young Arthur, who had come in, and sat opposite him, in that vacant and natural sorrow which belongs to the broken moments of such a parting.

At last Cuthbert descended the hall steps, which were full of the warm-hearted servants; and, pressing the hand of his affectionate pupil, mounted his horse and rode away.

The day was cold and wet: nothing could be more gloomy or comfortless than his long and lonely ride. He met only one train of pack-horses, and a few single travellers on horseback, throughout the day. He baited his animal at a

wayside alehouse, where he found nobody but a cross old woman and a deaf hostler; and it was not till the dusk of evening that he reached the town of Aylesbury, where he proposed sleeping.

Within five miles of this place he was overtaken by a gentleman on horseback, who fell into conversation with him; and who, being like himself on a journey to town, offered to join company with him that night at the inn.

Although it would have been far more agreeable to Cuthbert to have proceeded alone, yet the appearance of the stranger was so prepossessing, and his manners were so frank and courteous, that it was not possible to shake off his company without rudeness. Moreover, his speech had already shown him to be a man of gentle breeding, and that Cambridge had once reckoned him among her students, — so they rode forward together.

At the entrance of the town, hard by one of the first houses in the street, sat a cobbler working and singing in his hutch. The companion of Cuthbert here pulled his bridle; and, turning his beast's nose almost into it, called out.

in a loud jolly tone, "Ho, Crispin ! canst tell me the way to the church ?"

"No," said the cobbler, throwing up an indifferent glance, and then stooping again over his last.

"Art deaf, or hast lost thy wits, old surly?" said the traveller: "you know what a church is, don't you?"

"I know what it is not," replied the old cobbler bluntly, without looking off his work.

"What is it not, sirrah?"

"It is not a great stone building standing alone in the middle of a town," said the cobbler raising his head, and looking his interrogator full in the face.

"Thou hast more wit than good humour, knave," said our Cavalier.

"And thou words than good breeding," retorted the sturdy artisan.

"I see the stocks of this place are little used, or you should try how they fitted. You have not much fear, methinks, of the wooden collar. Didst ever see a pillory?"

"I have, and a godly man in it; and I shall

not soon forget the sight. Are you answered, my court bird?"

"You are a prick-eared knave; and, if I were not tired and hungry, you should smart for your saucy answers."

By this time a neighbour or two stood forth from the adjoining houses; and the horseman, turning to the nearest, said, "Prithee, friend, canst thou tell me the way to the Boar's Head, which is next to the church, as I think?"

"It is so, true enough," answered the man, "and well placed, to my thought; for thou wilt be sure to find the parson on the bench of it, or it may be in the skittle yard wrangling with cheating Bob, and staggering at his own cast: — ride straight on — you can't miss it."

"A pretty nest of godly rogues I have got into," said the traveller: "there will be an iron gag for your foul mouths soon." With this he struck spurs into his steed: the beast broke into a smart canter, — that of Cuthbert started in like manner; and they were instantly carried beyond the jeers and the loud laughter of the humorous old cobbler and his neighbours. Of

this little scene Cuthbert had been the silent spectator; indeed the dialogue was so short, and so rapidly spoken, that there was no room for any question or remark of his;—and his companion having observed a silver crest upon the holsters of Cuthbert, did not doubt that he was a church and king man,—especially as there had not dropped from him a single expression which savoured of the Puritan.

Mine host of the Boar's Head, a big and portly personage with bloated cheeks, received our weary guests with a cheerful welcome; and led the way to a large travellers' parlour, where, in an ample fire-place, huge logs were blazing on the hearth. The seats on either side were already occupied by guests, before whom, on small three-legged tables, their repasts were smoking.

At one of these sat two persons, whose appearance was that of military men:—the younger of the two was very handsome, and of a commanding figure. No sooner did the gentleman in Cuthbert's company approach the fire than this martial youth rose, and addressing

him by the name of Fleming, shook him cordially by the hand. The ear of Cuthbert did not catch the name by which, promptly responding to the recognition, Fleming replied, nor did he learn it throughout the evening. However, another small table was immediately drawn near, and covered. Eggs, sausages, and broiled bones were served up hastily; and, after Cuthbert and his companion had satisfied the keen appetites which they had gotten by a long journey in cold rain and on miry roads, a large jug of burnt claret was placed before them; and the following conversation between the two acquaintances was listened to by Cuthbert in silent astonishment:—

“ Well, Frank, you have not forgotten old times, I hope. I trust that we shall teach the volunteer gentry how to handle a sword after the fashion of the old Swedish troopers before long:— they made sorry work of it in the north last year; and for my part I was half ashamed to ride among such a rabble!”

“ What made you go at all then?” said the youthful soldier.

“ Why, to say truth, Frank, I found my life in the country very dull, and my old father’s hunting companions as heavy as lead ; and I heartily wished myself back in Germany, where I might hear a trumpet once more : — so when I heard that the King was going against the Scots away I posted to court, and waited upon his Majesty, and got a commission.”

“ I hope, Fleming, you made yourself master of the quarrel before you offered your services.”

“ Look you, Frank, I remember you was always as grave as a judge about war, and examined sides, and would know the rights of all that was done. That was never my way. I left Cambridge at nineteen, and went to the camp of Gustavus, as eager and as blind as a young colt ; and so again now : — wherever the King’s standard flies all must be right ; besides, I hate these pricked-eared Puritans, and yon Scotch psalm singers that wo’n’t use the Prayer Book.”

“ It seems, however, that they can use the broad sword, and with good effect, if accounts speak true.”

“ There you have me,” rejoined the cheerful and light-hearted campaigner,—“ there you have me. I never felt shame as a soldier till this Scotch campaign. Our tall fellows always turned their backs first, and retreated true run-away fashion : — you could never make them fire their pistols, and wheel off orderly ; and it was well for them that they had raw Scots troopers at their tails instead of Pappenheim’s cuirassiers.”

“ It is clear enough that you must have run too,” said the young soldier, laughing, “ or you would not be here to tell the story.”

“ To be sure I did, — but not without leaving the mark of my sword in the cheek of a stout Scotsman that pressed me a little too close and unmannerly. However, live and learn is a wise saying. When the King fairly raises a proper army, instead of a set of footmen and servants, commanded by courtiers and parsons, there will be warmer sport than we had in the north.”

“ It will be sorry and grave sport, methinks, comrade, when Englishmen stand up against

Englishmen, and little pleasure to see an old fellow-soldier in the ranks opposite."

"Odd's life, I shall never see you enact rebel."

"Rebel is a rough word:—suppose we change the subject."

The conversation was now continued on various indifferent matters till the hour for rest. Cuthbert himself made but few observations, and was strangely exercised in his mind by contemplating the characters before him. In addition to those already named, there was one other traveller at a table by himself, who had partaken of no better fare than a bowl of oatmeal porridge, and who sat intent over a small closely printed book, without once opening his lips, and seldom even raising his eyes. The companion of Cuthbert often looked contemptuously askance at him, and indulged in many a fling against the Puritans; but the silent stranger either did not or would not hear these rude jests, and, as they met with no encouragement from any one present, they fell flat and power-

less. At length the time of going to bed came; and the host appeared to conduct his guests to their chambers. Our host, having a quick eye to the quality of the parties, placed the Cavalier captain in his best chamber; the two military-looking men in the next; and the pale stranger in a small cold garret with Cuthbert.

As soon as the door was closed behind them, and the foot of the landlord was heard descending the stairs, the stranger approached Cuthbert and invited him to join in prayer.

"To me," said the stranger, with a face of the most earnest gravity, "to me is committed that rare and precious gift, the discerning of spirits: I see thou art a God-fearing youth: — as soon as thou didst enter the parlour I smelled the perfume of the angelic nature; even as also the sulphur and the brimstone of Tophet in the three sons of Belial, who are gone to lie down under the power of Beelzebub, and to sleep with evil spirits for company."

"Friend," said Cuthbert, "I do not understand you: it is not my custom to join in prayer

with an unknown stranger ; there is thy bed, and here is mine : — let us lie down upon them in peace, and commune with our own hearts and be still.”

“ Verily,” rejoined the stranger, “ thou art afraid : — it is no wonder : — thou art but a mere babe of grace, and thine eyes do see but dimly the glories of my high calling ; — but I tell thee thou art a chosen vessel of the Lord, — and even now I feel my bowels moved towards thee, and the spirit of prayer is upon me, and I must wrestle with the powers of darkness to deliver thy poor soul from the snare of the fowler. This is my command, — and even now I am appointed unto thee for an angel of defence, and the fight is begun.”

The stranger now threw himself upon his knees, and poured forth a long, rambling and blasphemous petition, — the words of which made Cuthbert shudder.

However, as he had been already told that there was no other chamber or bed vacant, and as he was greatly fatigued, he lay down to sleep, silently commending himself to the care of God,

and endeavouring to substitute a feeling of pity for the deep disgust with which this crazy chamber-fellow inspired him.

The last sounds of which he was conscious before his heavy eyes became sealed in forgetfulness were groanings from the adjoining bed — nor did he awake in the morning till it was broad daylight. He looked around — the chamber was empty ; — at this he felt thankful : and, supposing that his last odd companion had travelled forward at an earlier hour, he arose, and proceeded to dress himself ; but he instantly discovered that his purse was gone. He went forth on the stairs, and called loudly for the landlord. It was some time before he made his appearance ; and when he did so, he listened to the tale with hard indifference, and coarse incredulity.

“ Ah ! that’s an old story, my devil’s scholar, but it wo’n’t go down with me : — you shan’t budge from the Boar’s Head till you pay your shot, I can tell you ; and your nag shall go to the market cross before I let you ride off without paying for provender.”

Cuthbert's fury was roused to the uttermost ; but his hot words were only laughed at by the rosy Boniface, who soon left him. He slipped on his clothes with all haste, and came down into the guest parlour, where the Cavalier and the two military men were already seated at breakfast by a cheerful fire. He stated his case before them all with the warm earnestness of truth. The Cavalier picked his teeth and whistled ; but the younger of the other two seemed very much to sympathise in the embarrassment of Cuthbert, which in fact was more serious than he himself apprehended ; for mine host came presently into the parlour to say, that his horse and his vallise were taken away by his chamber-fellow before dawn.

“ It was all a made up thing,” said the landlord in a storm of passion. “ I saw they were a couple of hypocritical rogues, and packed 'em together for safety's sake — 't would only be thief rob thief, I knew : — but it's my belief they take the horse turn by turn, and steal in company ; for yon old one has left half a bottle of strong

waters and the leg of a cold goose at his bed-foot: — come, young knave,” he added, attempting to take Francis by the collar, “come with me afore the justice. He’ll find thee a lodging in our cage.”

With a force to which indignation gave strength, Cuthbert threw back the fat bully against the wall, and turning to the Cavalier, who had rode with him part of his yesterday’s journey,—

“You may remember, sir,” he said, “that when you joined me, I told you that I came from the neighbourhood of Warwick, and was on my journey to London. I told you, moreover, that I was a member of the University of Cambridge: — the silver crest on my holsters was the crest of Sir Oliver Heywood of Milverton, in whose house I have resided for this year past, as tutor to his nephew’s son. The animal, in fact, is Sir Oliver’s property, and was kindly lent me for the journey: — if you will answer for me to this landlord, and give me a crown piece to travel on with, I will faithfully repay you when I reach town. My name,

sir, is Cuthbert Noble, son of Mr. Noble, rector of Cheddar, in Somerset."

"A pack of stuff, good master," said the angry landlord to the Cavalier, — "don't you be made a fool of; don't be bamboozled by a smooth trumped up cock and a bull story like this: if the horse is Sir Oliver Heywood's, they have stolen it, and change riders on the road to Smithfield, where they will turn it into a purse of nobles before night. Marry, I'll go for constables, and, as you are honest gentlemen and true, hold the knave fast in your keeping till I come back again." Before, however, he could leave the room, as much to his astonishment and shame as to the surprise and relief of Cuthbert, the younger of the two travellers, whom his companion the Cavalier had last night claimed acquaintance with, came forward in a very open and cordial manner, and assured Cuthbert of his readiness to assist him.

"I am connected," said the noble looking youth, "with the family at Milverton, nor is the name of Master Cuthbert Noble unknown to me. My purse is at your service; and I shall

be glad of your company on the road. Though I have no horse to offer you, post-horses can be easily procured at every stage."

Thus was Cuthbert at once released from a perplexity, and introduced to the friendship of Francis Heywood.

CHAP. XVI.

The great vicissitude of things amongst men is the vicissitude of sects and religions ; for those orbs rule in men's minds most.

BACON.

ON the third of November, 1640, the fatal Long Parliament began. On the 12th, the Earl of Strafford was impeached of treason, and committed to the Black Rod. The Lords denied him bail and council ; and he was, in a few days more, commanded into close imprisonment in the Tower. One hundred thousand pounds were now voted to the Scots, and borrowed of the city of London. Ship money was soon questioned by the Parliament, and voted an illegal tax ; and, in fine, all grievances and abuses were loudly proclaimed, and resolutely brought forward, by intrepid and patriotic men ; of whom the best and noblest did certainly never contem-

plate, at that time, the sad and humiliating close of the labours and the authority of that memorable and august assembly. August, of a truth, that assembly may be called, in which a Hampden and a Falkland stood, at after moments, opposed in debate; and in which, in the following year, the grand remonstrance of the Commons was the subject of grave deliberation for thirty hours, and was only carried, at last, by a majority of nine voices.

But to return to our story. It may be supposed that Cuthbert Noble was no indifferent or unmoved spectator of the great public events which every day brought forth in the winter of 1640. With his serious and peculiar notions, the questions that affected liberty of conscience and church reform were those which most deeply interested him; and when, upon the morning of the 23d of November, Prynne and Burton entered triumphantly into Westminster, followed by many thousands of the people, Cuthbert was foremost in the crowd; and not a zealot among them was more wildly excited than himself.

Laughter and tears succeeded to each other, as those around expressed their rude sympathy; — now in remarks quaint and comical — now in pious commiseration, or in the stern tones of indignant and just anger.

“Which is old Prynne?” said one. — “That’s he,” said his neighbour, “with his black head clipped close, looking, for all the world, like a skull-cap.” — “See how the old boy grins.” — “He’s no beauty.” — “Hurrah! hurrah!” — “Can you hear, old boy?” — “I wonder if a man can hear without his ears.” — “To be sure a’ can, all the better.” — “Well, he can’t have the ear-ache no more.” — “Don’t talk so unfeeling.” — “Look, poor dear good man, he is as white as a sheet.” — “That is prison and hunger.” — “This is your bishops’ work — od rot ’em — their turn shall come.”

With such vulgarities were mixed the solemn tones and pious expressions of many a sincere Christian, giving utterance to praise and thanksgiving for the deliverance of these persecuted men; while, here and there, a strong voice

would be heard, above the crowd, denouncing the tyranny of the church and the crown in coarse language, in which the Establishment was likened to the whore of Babylon, — and the Archbishop of Canterbury was pointed out to the vengeance of the rabble.

Such language would, in a moment of calm reflection, have been utterly revolting to the feelings of Cuthbert. He would have shut his ears to the base and bloody cry, and hurried away from the wretches who gave it utterance, as from the company of sinners, whose feet were already planted in the paths of wickedness, and were swift to shed blood. But now, though such fierce cries gave a jar to his better dispositions and nobler nature, they were regarded as the natural ebullitions of an irritated mob; and he stood among them as a partaker of their guilt by the sanction of his presence.

Nothing is so blind — nothing is so deaf — nothing can stoop so low — as party spirit; — and at no period of English history was this more fully exemplified than at that of which we

are now speaking. The Cavaliers, on their side, were not without the support of a rabble of their own ; and by these, the slang of the tavern, the bear garden, and the brothel, was exhausted to furnish epithets of scorn, contempt, and ridicule, by which they might insult their fanatical opponents.

To the mental eye of Cuthbert the two victims of a severe and intolerant hierarchy stood out in large and disproportionate grandeur, — filling all the foreground of the picture upon which he now gazed to the exclusion of all other objects.

He saw them bearing the evident marks of torture and degradation on their mutilated forms. They had been thus treated, according to his notion, for a mere error in judgment — they were sufferers for conscience-sake : — his heart grew hot within him, — and he would have called down fire from heaven on the heads of their oppressors.

He accompanied the crowd all through Westminster ; and, in the eagerness of his excited mood, pressed in once close to the horse of Prynn,

that he might utter a "God save you, master!" to the stern Puritan, face to face.

There was a keen twinkle of triumph in the little eyes of the sour precisian, which showed that he felt his day of revenge would soon come, and that it would be his turn to play inquisitor towards his late haughty oppressor.

However, he would have been more than human had he been superior to such an infirmity, after sustaining injuries so great.

It happened on the day of this public entry of Prynne and Burton that Cuthbert was alone in the quarter of Westminster; and having remained a long time gazing on the show, he went into a tavern in a narrow street behind the Abbey to refresh.

After satisfying his hunger over a fine joint of roast beef in company with a grave looking lawyer, who sat opposite him at the same table, with a roll of parchments and papers by his side, the man of law proposed a cup of canary to the health of Masters Prynne and Burton, in which he was readily seconded by Cuthbert.

"Ah," said the stranger bitterly, "this is a

different kind of procession to the fool's mum-mery which they made us play seven years ago, before the wanton queen and her dancing French gentlemen."

"What! you mean the mask of the inns of court, on Candlemas-day, seven years ago?" asked Cuthbert.

"Just so: that was got up to tickle the court party, and trample down Prynne and his book; but tables are turning."

"Well, though I think they were very tyrannical about Prynne, I did not like his book; and never saw any harm in a mask or an interlude."

"Why, to judge by your looks, you could only have been a boy when that mask was given, and perhaps you did not see it."

"That is true; but I read the account of it that was printed, and surely it was a brave and glorious show; and, methinks, there were some witty hints given his Majesty in the anti-masks, which he might be the wiser for."

"The man Charles Stuart," said the stranger, "will never be the better for hints."

It was the first time that Cuthbert had ever heard from any lips so irreverent a mention of the King, and he coloured and was silent.

“I say he will never be the better for hints,—though it is true that some of them were broad enough, and too humorous for offence; but you have forgotten that there was one anti-mask got up by the serviles to insult the poor. If it may not have a sneer of ridicule for poverty and misfortune, the pleasure of the proud wanteth its best relish.”

“I do not understand you,” said Cuthbert; “of what speak you, master?”

“Of that which has been played in joke, and shall come to pass in earnest. Little they thought, with their gibes and their mockery, that they were but foreshowing events, which the turn of the wheel is even now bringing to pass. I do remember all their gilded chariots and rich apparel, and gay liveries; and in the midst of that costly show, there rode an anti-mask of cripples and beggars, clothed in rags, and mounted on sorry lean jades, gotten out of dust carts, with dirty urchins snapping tongs and shovels before

them for music,—and thus was the noble music, and thus were the gallant horses, and the velvets and silks and spangled habits, made more pleasing to the painted court Jezebels by the pitiful contrast. Shall not the Lord visit for these things?” he added, raising his voice, and changing the tone of it to a solemn sternness: “Yea, verily, he shall visit:—in his hand there is a cup,—and the dregs thereof shall be drunk out by the oppressors,—and the sword shall go through the land, and it shall be drunk with blood.”

The severe inference thus forced by the speaker from a trifling circumstance, of which the joyous projectors of the interlude thought perhaps very differently, and which might have been so turned by a playful mind, as a caricature against the foreign musicians, then so much about court; or, again, by a thoughtful mind, as a memento of those dark realities of human misery which invite and demand compassion. This inference was at once received by Cuthbert as just. It touched a chord in his heart that immediately responded, and he was played upon

as a lute by his companion ; till, at last, the latter opening a roll of parchment requested him to put down his name as a subscriber to the necessities of a few godly and persecuted men now suffering imprisonment for the great cause of liberty of conscience, and whose families were quite destitute.

From his slender purse Cuthbert instantly took the few crowns it contained, and only reserving sufficient money to pay for his dinner, shook his new acquaintance heartily by the hand, and set forth on his way to the city, where he lodged, with a heart glowing with the love of God, of his country, and of mankind. His evil angel had only to appear clothed like an angel of light, and Cuthbert would follow, nothing doubting, whithersoever he was led. The false fire, which glimmered over the dangerous quagmire of gloomy fanaticism, was mistaken by Cuthbert for light from Heaven ; and by the frequent perusal of controversies on religion, and a constant attendance on the private ministries of those fierce zealots, who were urging forward the overthrow of the Established Church, he

became at length totally bewildered. It was in vain that Francis Heywood exposed to him the hypocrisy and inconsistency of some of those wolves in sheep's clothing by whom he was now continually surrounded, to the neglect of Heywood's own society and that of the higher and better order of the Parliamentary supporters. He listened with pity to remonstrances which he considered as proceeding from a man of the world, and a deceived soul wandering in darkness; nevertheless his affectionate disposition survived the strength of his reason. He looked up to and loved Francis Heywood as a model of what the natural man might attain to; and as in their political views they were altogether agreed, they very often met. The ardent Francis might indeed have well doubted of the soundness of a political creed which numbered among its supporters such diversified and crazy characters as those whom he saw daily embrace it: but although he was not able to endure their sanctimonious professions, and morose manners, he viewed them as instruments necessary to the present warfare of principles;

and, having returned from America on purpose to stand up for the popular rights, he remained steadfastly at his post, watching with intense interest the proceedings of parliament, and eager for the moment when those services, which he came to offer, might be required in the field.

In one particular the lives of Francis Heywood and of Cuthbert Noble during the two following years corresponded well. Never were those hard duties which self-denial enjoins, practised with a more resolute and cheerful virtue. The means of both were slender; and they supported themselves by the exercise of their respective talents with credit and success.

Cuthbert attended daily in the families of two or three merchants of the Puritan party as classical tutor to their boys; while Francis Heywood, reserving with great care the sum necessary to purchase a good charger, and military equipments, whenever he might need them, maintained his current expenses by the drawing of maps, plans, and views illustrative of the late campaigns of Gustavus Adolphus, and of the actual warfare in Germany which was then

carrying on. These drawings found a sufficient sale, among the curious in such matters, to remunerate the light labour of producing them; and though the printseller, who purchased them from Francis, told him that gentlemen, very capable of advancing his interests, had made inquiries after him, yet he was forbidden by Francis to disclose his residence, or to answer any questions about him. His leisure from this easy occupation was employed in useful studies or in manly exercises. He daily frequented a school of arms, not for instruction, indeed, for he was a master of all weapons, but for health and diversion; and for the same end he went often to the grand manège in the quarter of the court; where he was so great a favourite with the chevalier, who taught the graces of horsemanship, that he was asked as a kindness to exercise the most spirited and beautiful animals of his stud in the open country: — an offer which, from the delight he took in the amusement of schooling a young and high bred horse, he very often accepted.

Francis Heywood was not unknown to many

families with whom his father had been intimate; and by some of them, notwithstanding his fortunes and his politics, and by others on account of them, he was invited to several houses, where he might have enjoyed all the pleasures and the refinements of social life; but he very rarely accepted their invitations, not merely from mistaken pride, but from a disrelish of scenes which would always so strongly and painfully suggest to him the happy intercourse he had once enjoyed in that domestic circle, of which his adored Katharine was at once the charm and the idol.

Upon this sweet memory, in lonely hours of leisure, his mind would feed, and he would discourse of it, not indeed in words, but in the soft breathings of his lute; till, suddenly, by the strong effort of a manly will, he would tear himself from the dangerous indulgence, and sit closely down to his writing desk, that he might complete the minute journal of public events which he kept for his father, and despatched, as opportunities offered, to New England.

To the review of these grave subjects he

brought a generous spirit ; and it was not without an occasional pang that he related the progress and triumph of the cause to which he was sincerely attached.

He could not but exult to see the principles of government openly examined, and the just rights and liberties of the people clearly defined.

He looked with veneration upon the labours of the Commons ; and he watched with jealousy the advisers of the crown, and the sycophants about the court. He saw many abuses rectified, many grievances redressed. He saw the iniquitous Star Chamber and the High Commission Court abolished, — and a noble security against a return of misgovernment and tyranny in the famous bill for a triennial parliament.

This last measure, the main pillar of the new constitution, was received by the whole nation with rejoicings ; and when it passed solemn thanks were presented to his Majesty by both houses of parliament. But the sincerity of the court party and the moderation of the reformers were alike suspicious. The passions,

the prejudices, and the interests of conflicting parties had been too rudely aroused by discussion to subside without an explosive collision; and it was evident to Francis that the struggle between the prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of parliament would never terminate without an appeal to arms.

He shuddered to see the scaffold stained with the blood of Strafford; and though he was among those who clamoured against the minister, he profoundly commiserated the man, as the abandoned victim of his party, — and in his heart he despised Charles for signing the death-warrant of his favourite.

CHAP. XVII.

There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.

MILTON.

THE affliction of the good parson of Cheddar at the strange and painful conduct of his son Cuthbert was heavy to bear. However, from a sense of duty to his weaker partner, he made great efforts to preserve his wonted serenity and composure in her presence; but when alone he was bowed down in the dust.

Nothing could possibly present a greater contrast to the tone of religious profession which was, at this period, obtaining a wide reception among men than that in which old Noble lay prostrate in his closet before his God.

He had ever been a meek and cheerful Christian ; but there were depths of humiliation which he had not as yet fathomed ; and he would have fainted at the waves of trouble, which his prescient eye saw rolling onward, if he had not felt the hand, which led him down into the deep, was that of a heavenly Father, if he had not heard a voice that whispered in his ear, "*It is I, be not afraid.*"

In vain did he exhaust his heart in sound, pious, and affectionate remonstrances, meditated and penned in the spirit of prayer, that he might recall his dear and wandering child to the bosom of the church, or, at all events, so far recover him from gross delusions as to see him join that upright and devout portion of the community, which, though differing from the discipline of the church, maintained a pure and practical doctrine.

In vain did he press the return of Cuthbert to Cheddar, by every argument which parental love could suggest.

The letters of Noble and his wife were replied to in the words of love ; but the fruit of

his new persuasion was an obstinate self-will ; and while he implored them, at great length, to consider his views, and urged the danger of despising them, he evinced to others, what was not perhaps suspected by himself, a degree of spiritual pride only to be exceeded by the strength of his delusion.

He had adopted the notions of those fanatics who were styled Fifth-monarchy Men, and who ranged themselves where, indeed, any sect, however extravagant, might have found a place, under the banner of the Independents.

It was some consolation to these troubled parents to hear from the Philips's, their relations, and also from other friends, that the life and the conduct of Cuthbert were, as regarded all moral and social duties, a credit to any theory, and such as became the pure precepts of the Gospel.

His intellect was clear upon every other subject, except on that which, if it be rashly touched, seems to be guarded by invisible angels, who put forth their hands and smite the daring

intruder with madness. "Oppression," saith the preacher, "will make a wise man mad;" — a truth abundantly proved by the events, which, leading first to a secret and salutary reform, ended at last in a bloody revolution and an iron rule.

It may be added, that he who seeketh to meddle with the hidden mysteries of unfulfilled prophecy is often smitten with blindness and confusion for his presumption. Thus it was with Cuthbert: — sensible, amiable, and affectionate in all the relations of life, he was now the subject of a monomania, and turned a deaf ear to the voice of truth and wisdom, though it spoke with all the authority and all the earnestness of a father.

These were not times in which a minister could leave his parish for a distant journey, nor, indeed, was it at all likely that the presence of his parents would have effected that change in the sentiments or the course of Cuthbert, which their admirable and Christian letters had failed to produce.

Time wore on gloomily enough, even in the

peaceful parsonage at Cheddar. Many a time as old Noble paced his garden amid sunbeams and flowers, praising that "mercy which endureth for ever," his thanksgivings ended in tears and lamentations, not for his domestic troubles, but for the great evils which he feared and expected would befall the church and the nation.

Laud was already paying the penalty of his mistaken, but certainly conscientious, severity, in a prison, from whence it might be plainly foretold he would at length be conducted to the block. The bishops' votes in parliament were taken away, and the deans and chapters were already voted against in the Commons, although their spoliation had not yet taken place, neither were the cathedral services as yet discontinued. As regularly, therefore, as the Thursday came round, Noble, if not prevented by a special call of duty at home, made his weekly visit to the fair city of Wells; where he in the first instance always bent his steps to the cathedral, and joined the congregation assembled for morning service.

It was on a saint's day, in the summer of 1641, that, as usual, he proceeded to that venerable and glorious temple, and took his seat in the vacant stall which it was his wont to occupy. Directly opposite he observed a tall uncouth man of harsh features and a sour countenance, sitting very upright, and glancing a severe and restless eye at the organ, the first tones of which were pealing through the long aisles, as the dean, the prebends, and other officers of the choir, preceded by the vergers with their maces, slowly entered, and reverently took their seats.

The service began, and was conducted with that solemn decency, and with those clear fine chants, which dispose most hearts to a subdued feeling of intense devotion.

There is a something in sacred music which does wonderfully compose the mind, and cleanse it of all earthly-rooted cares. Upon the stranger above mentioned, however, it produced no such effect. He sat erect, cold, and contemptuous: he put aside the Book of Common Prayer with a rude thrust; and taking a small volume from his pocket opened it with ostentatious gra-

vity, and, not joining in the worship that he witnessed, either by response, gesture, or any conformity of posture with those around him, sat, now casting his eyes on the page of his book, now severely around, and now raising them to Heaven after a manner that left nothing but the jaundiced whites visible.

This strange conduct disturbed, irritated, or amused the observers, according to the impression that was made upon them. Some of the prebends and vicars choral looked red and angry. The dean was greatly distressed, and knew not what to do. At first he called the verger, with a design to remove the intruder; but, upon second thoughts, he feared that a yet greater interruption and indecency might take place if such a course was attempted, he therefore commanded his feelings with as much dignity as he could. But his grave frowns were totally without power upon the youthful choristers, whose laughter would have been loud and audible, but for the thick folds of the surplice with which they stuffed their rebellious and aching jaws.

Noble himself was mournfully agitated, and prayed in the spirit with that deep and melancholy fervour which hath no outward expression but the abased eyes.

By degrees, the congregation recovered their composure, and never was an anthem performed with more earnest solemnity, or a sweetness more touching to the inmost soul, than the "*Ne Irascaris*," the "Be not Wroth," or "Bow thine Ear" of the famous composer Bird. At the words "Sion, thy Sion is wasted and brought low," which are set to a tender and solemn passage, and are sung very soft and slow, the effect was sublime. Moved by the deep pathos of the expression, the cheeks of Noble, as of a few others present, were bathed in tears.

But the stranger remained in his seat without rising, and perused his book with a kind of resolved and insulting inattention to it all.

The service was not permitted to close without this mysterious personage marking his contempt of it yet farther, by rising suddenly, while all the congregation were on their knees,

and stalking slowly down the middle of the aisle with a loud and measured stamp of his great thick boots.

He wore by his side a long heavy-looking sword, and had certainly the air of a man who could use it, if he chose, with little fear and no favour.

Noble joined the clergy in the chapter-room directly after the morning prayers were ended, and there learned that there had been a riot the night before in the streets, excited by some mischievous emissary from London; and that some of the rabble had burned a bishop in effigy, in the close just under the windows of the dean. It seemed, however, that this outrage had been committed by a band of low persons, who had come up from Bristol to attend a fair, and had brought with them sundry printed papers and ribald songs to distribute in the lanes and alleys of the city: the object of which was to bring the church and clergy into public contempt.

However, it so happens that, for the most part, the inhabitants of a cathedral town take a great pride in the edifice itself, whatever may

be their indifference to religion. Those magnificent structures are the first wonders upon which the eyes of the human beings, born and suckled beneath their shadow, are taught to gaze. They are noble and solemn features in the scene of early life; and are printed so indelibly on the mind, that, let the native of a cathedral city wander where he will, the recollection of the venerable temple goes with him, associated, in his memory, with his birthplace, his holydays, his truant hours, with the merry music of festival bells, with the pride of having often seen strangers and travellers, both of high and low degree, walk about its walls, and linger in its spacious aisles, with pleasure and admiration.

Therefore a party among the common people was easily roused to take up sticks and stones against the insulting mischief-makers, who were thus at last driven away from the city with great tumult.

It was the very day following this riot that the offensive adventure in the cathedral, which we have just related, occurred. As no doubt

existed in the minds of the clergy assembled in the chapter-room that the extraordinary person, who had just committed so gross and indecent an outrage in a place of public worship, was, in some measure, connected with the disturbance of the preceding day, they resolved to make an immediate complaint to the Mayor of Wells, that the obnoxious individual might be taken up, and committed to prison, or otherwise punished for his offence.

Some little time had been lost in their consultations; and they came forth from the cathedral in a body, with the intention of despatching two of the prebends, already deputed for that purpose, to wait upon the mayor, when, to their surprise and mortification, they saw the object of their anger approaching them on horseback. As he drew near, it was evident that the opportunity of arresting him was already lost. He rode a very powerful young horse of generous breed and fine action — and he sat upon him as on a throne.

“Look ye,” said he, as he drew up close to the astonished group, — “Look ye, Scribes and

Pharisees ! hypocrites ! — ye love greetings in the market-place — take mine : — the time is come to set your houses in order — even now the decree is gone forth — the sword is now sharpening that shall pass through the land : — it glitters, look ye.” So saying, with a grim smile he drew the blade of his own half out of the scabbard, and let it fall again with a forcible rattle.

The dean, who was a bold and athletic man, disregarding this fierce action, made an active effort to seize the bridle of the Puritan’s steed ; but the wary rider with a jerk of the reins threw up the animal’s head, and at the same moment touching his flank with the spur made him give a plunge forward that scattered the frightened priests a few yards on either side. Nevertheless, the dean remonstrated in very angry terms against his insulting abuse ; as did others, who were, like himself, courageous. They did not, however, succeed either in stopping the fanatic or in driving him away : — a small mob was gathering in the cathedral yard, and the fiery zealot continued his address.

“What mean ye, ye priests of Baal, by your silks, and your satins, and your hoods, and your scarfs, and your square caps, and your surplices, and all your fooleries? what mean your boy choristers that bleat like young kids, and your men choristers that bellow like oxen? what means your grunting organ? Is it thus you worship God, as though he were an idol and an abomination, and his temple like that of the heathen? It should be a house of prayer, and ye have made it a den of thieves, and all its services vain and lewd mummeries. I cry, Fie upon you!—Wo, wo, wo!—Ye shall see me again when the blast of the trumpet soundeth, and mine eye shall not pity. I will smite, I will not spare you. Have ye not preached blasphemies? have ye not broken and polluted the holy Sabbath with your sports and your harlotries? have ye not shed the blood of God-fearing men? yea, verily. Now hear my warning:—come out of her, come out of her, my people. There are among you, even among your priests, some whom the Lord hath chosen:—yet again I call to you, Come out of her, come out of Babylon, that ye

perish not with her. To me is appointed this cry : — every where I must lift up my voice thus, till the day of vengeance come. Wo shall be the portion of those who hear me not !”

An insane delight gleamed in his dark eyes, a convulsive energy distorted his features, and seemed to affect and agitate his whole form. The crowd drew closer to him : the resolute dean beckoning them forward, again advanced with the intention of seizing him, when he suddenly gave his horse the head ; and touching the high spirited beast with both spurs, he was borne out of their sight at a few rapid bounds, and was very soon beyond all danger of pursuit.

Several of the mob ran round the corner after him jeering and cheering ; but the clergy went their ways, by twos and threes, and talked over the uncomfortable though diseased words of the fanatic with much gravity and composure.

Many painful extravagancies of a fanatic character had been already committed in various parts of the country ; and in London many scandalous scenes had been enacted, expressive

of a contempt for the Established Church and her ministers.

The prelates and dignitaries were the especial marks of popular hatred ; but, hitherto, nothing approaching to the indecency and outrage above recorded had occurred in the neighbourhood and under the eye of Noble.

Again he could have wished Cuthbert to have been present, as he had formerly wished that he could have witnessed the unmannerly and unchristian bearing of Master Daws, the morose and designing curate, whose interview with Noble we have in a former part of this story related.

“ Surely,” thought the mild man of peace, — “ Surely such things would open his eyes to the spirit that is abroad, and to the aim and end of these violent men, who would purify our venerable church as with fire, and wash away her few stains with the blood and the tears of her faithful children.”

After partaking of a dinner, with little appetite, in the house of his friend, where the party assembled formed but a sad society, and where

the time passed in the discussion of more grave and anxious matters than those upon which they were commonly engaged in these innocent weekly meetings, the worthy parson mounted his old mare, and rode back slowly to Cheddar. His thoughts were so profoundly and mournfully absorbed by reflections on the very startling occurrences of the morning, that he saw not the clouds which were gathering overhead, until he was awakened to observe them by a sudden and loud clap of thunder. The sunshine was suddenly obscured by a deep gloom. A few heavy rain drops fell upon him, and were soon followed by a thick and rushing deluge of such rain as falls in summer tempests. The sky was covered with a mass of clouds black as a funeral pall. Every moment flashes of angry lightning passed across it in vivid and arrowy forms; while thunder followed, peal after peal rolling in quick and troubled succession. Noble had just entered the defile or pass by which Cheddar is approached; and as the narrow road lies in the bottom of a chasm, on either side of which the rocks rise many hundred feet with a terrific

grandeur, the horrid gloom — the lurid and ghastly lights — and the prolonged echoes with which the roar of the thunder was borne from crag to crag — gave a tenfold awfulness to the storm, and sublimely shadowed forth the power of Jehovah.

Amid this war of elements the meek parson felt almost happy : — his frightened beast had stopped beneath a rock that inclined somewhat over the road, though not sufficiently to afford any shelter from the rain. He was drenched to the skin himself, and as he could not urge his animal forward he dismounted ; but the wet and the delay were forgotten, were disregarded. There are moments of communion with the Deity, which, when they are accorded to his feeble children, cause their spirits to be rapt in seraphic love. The adoration that is born of a faith trembling yet holding fast is the sublimest human worship : — “ the firmest thing in this inferior world is a believing soul.” And he that can lift up his voice with the Psalmist, and, amid the horrors of a tempest, can say, “ Praise the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within

me praise his holy name," hath, as it were, a sublime foretaste of that great and terrible day of the Lord, when the Christian shall witness the final and everlasting triumph of his Redeemer over sin and death,—and shall behold his salvation draw nigh.

CHAP. XVIII.

With that the mighty thunder dropt away
From God's unwary arm, now milder grown,
And melted into tears.

GILES FLETCHER.

IN such a spirit Noble endured the pelting of the storm, and listened to the rolling of the thunder, and gazed upon the dread illumination which flashed at intervals on the desolate and dreary rocks around him. The fury of this summer tempest was soon exhausted: — the exceeding blackness of the clouds gave place to a lighter, though a sunless, sky; the claps of thunder were few and distant, and the lightning became a faint and harmless coruscation. The rain was thin and transparent; and Noble continued his way on foot, followed by his old mare, whose docility was that of an aged dog. They had not proceeded above two hundred

yards when the mare gave a sudden start, and ran up a heap of loose stones on the right of the road. On the left of it, at the foot of a tremendous precipice, Noble descried the object which had alarmed her, and which, but for her fright, he should have passed without notice. A man lay upon the ground bleeding. Noble immediately crossed to the spot, and stooping down, he recognised the person of the stern fanatic, whose conduct at Wells has been related in the foregoing chapter. He was insensible, but did not, upon examination, appear to have sustained any injury more serious than a severe and stunning bruise; as well as a cut on the forehead from a sharp flint. From the prints of his horse's feet, it seemed evident, at first, that he had been thrown where he then lay, and had fainted; but on looking again, Noble observed that his pockets were turned inside out, and that his sword and cartridge belt were gone; for he remembered in the morning to have remarked his arms very particularly, and to have been struck by the circumstance of a man of his rigid ungraceful figure sitting so

admirably on horseback, and managing the young animal which he rode with such a light and easy hand. Moreover, he now saw that the impressions of the horse's hoofs had been made before the rain had fallen. His first care was to endeavour to restore the sufferer from his swoon. This he soon effected by chafing the body to restore circulation, and by applying to the nostrils a pungent preparation, which he always carried about with him, as a preservative from infection, when his duties called him to visit the sick beds of those who were afflicted with any disease considered pestilential. When Noble had satisfied himself that the unfortunate man was a little recovered by the returning consciousness in his eyes, and the regularity of his breathing, he went after his mare. She had not strayed far, and he soon brought her back, and after a while he had the satisfaction to observe that the wounded traveller was able to move and sit up. He now persuaded and assisted him to get upon the patient beast, and supporting him in the saddle with his hand, moved off slowly towards Cheddar. Half a mile

on they met plain Peter, who had come out to look for his master, and was wondering and uncomfortable at the unusual lateness of his return.

The sight explained itself; and the honest domestic expressing some sorrow for the sufferer, but more for his master, took his place on the other side of the mare, and aided Noble in the task of supporting the stranger, who was so weak and exhausted that he could hardly be held upon the saddle by their joint exertions for the rest of the road.

Although not a syllable had been uttered by the object of their care, that was intelligible to either, and although Noble had not mentioned a word about having seen him at Wells, still Peter had an instinctive dislike to the man's features and his dress — from both of which he pronounced him a Puritan. He went so far as to provoke an angry rebuke from his master for opposing the benevolent resolution of the latter to take him to his own house.

"Surely," said Peter, "a pallet at the Jolly Woodman will serve his turn; — he'll be well

enough taken care of by Dame Crowther : why bring him home to trouble and frighten my good mistress, and to make a fuss, and a dirt, and a sick house of the parsonage ?”

“ Peter,” said Noble, “ how would you like to be dealt by if you had fallen among thieves, and lay bruised and bleeding, and without a friend or a penny ?”

“ Why, I should think an inn good enough for me ; and so it is writ in the Bible.”

“ Peter you are hard — and know not what spirit you are of — and speak foolishly.”

“ Ah ! well I mind what you said once about that parable, and how you told us that had the good Samaritan’s house been over against the inn he would have taken him in at his own gate ; — but somehow I don’t like this fancy of yours — it will be a bad job : — when his saintship is warmed by your fire, mayhap he will turn out a serpent.”

“ Never use that word lightly, Peter. I have often forbade you to trifle with it — duties are ours, events are God’s. I shall certainly take this man in.” Having thus decided, they went

forward to the parsonage in silence. Mistress Noble came out eagerly as soon as they appeared. Her mind was soon quieted on the surprise which the sight of the wounded stranger caused her, and her kind and hospitable heart acquiesced instantly to the proposal of her good husband.

The sufferer was at once carefully put to bed; and Noble, as by his own bright fire he put on the warm dry vestments which he found ready for him in his study, revolved the singular incidents of the eventful day with wonder, gratitude, and a calm confiding faith.

He could not but reflect thankfully on his own escape from the misfortune which had befallen the temporary inmate of his dwelling. For want of a better booty, doubtless he would have been assaulted himself by the robbers who had fallen upon the Puritan; and, had he not been preceded by this traveller on the road, or had he left Wells at an earlier hour, he might have suffered in his room, or shared his fate.

Again, how strange that a daring enthusiast, who had that very morning violated the sanctity

of the cathedral, and had insulted the ministers of the church in their decent performance of public and solemn worship, should, before the setting of the sun which had witnessed his impiety, be laid in the dust, and left dependent upon one who had been revolted by his fierce conduct for the mercies of help and protection.

“To-morrow,” said Noble to his wife, as he related to her all the circumstances which had taken place at Wells, “when our guest is in a reasonable and repenting mood, I may, perhaps, speak a word in season that shall serve to deliver him from the chains of that cruel and bigoted spirit of persecution by which he is held. God preserve our Cuthbert from the hateful errors of men like these! It has been well observed, that though the fanatic cannot be seduced by the love of any sinful pleasures, yet that he can be readily persuaded to walk in blood by the lust of a power which he deceives himself in thinking he should assuredly use to the glory of the King of heaven, and the benefit of the faithful people of God. When will Christians

learn that the kingdom of the Messiah is not of this world?"

They had not retired for the night, when their worthy neighbour Blount, the franklin, who had but just returned from Glastonbury, came in to learn the particulars of what had occurred at Wells, and to tell the bad news which he had heard at Glastonbury that morning.

"The devil is busy enough, Master Noble," said the old man as he entered: "there is a little party of vinegar-faced rogues coming to the Bald Raven at Axbridge to-morrow, who call themselves 'a Corresponding Committee for informing and aiding the Grand Committee of Religion and that for scandalous Ministers;' and they tell me that that sour hypocrite Daws is as busy as a bee among them already. But what is this I hear about one of these godly rogues having been half murdered under the cliff and lying in your house?"

Noble told him all the circumstances; and Peter, who had lingered a little at the parlour door, said, "Ay, I can see by Master Blount's

eyebrows he don't think it were a wise job to take this round-headed madman in here. Why he's talking a pack of wild stuff enough to frighten the maidens out of their wits."

On hearing this, Noble, accompanied by Blount, went up stairs to the chamber of their inmate, and found him sitting upright in his bed, and parleying with some visionary appearance, after a wild but most earnest manner.

As soon as they entered the room, he turned towards them and sniffed repeatedly, then gravely said, "Two good spirits and one bad — verily I am not forsaken — two to one against thee, Beelzebub — look gentle spirits — look upon the wall — there goes a coach drawn by lions and tigers — there goes Everard the conjurer in boots and spurs — here is the great fiery dragon — who hath taken away my trusty sword? — where is my horse? — a horse is a vain thing to save a man — see how it grows — the dragon — the great red dragon — taller — taller — it fills the room — save Lord, or I perish."

To these wild, incoherent expressions, produced by the strange images which flitted before

his troubled fancy, succeeded a profuse perspiration, and they persuaded him to lie down under the blankets, that he might obtain the full benefit of such a relief.

He did so, and they could now only hear whispered murmurs, and humble tones, as of a person praying with tears. Noble himself was not unaffected by this scene; and even Blount admitted, that, if it were not for the mischief they did, some of these enthusiasts were rather to be pitied than punished. "Now here," said he, "is a case, where they should shave the head and lock up the poor creature in an hospital; but the worst matter is, they go about like mad dogs, biting all the folk they meet—and so they must e'en be dealt with in like manner."

"You are not far wrong, neighbour, in judging many of them crazy; but there are cunning men behind to urge them on: and there certainly are many excellent and pious persons, who, as they stand on the same side in this sad quarrel, give a credit to the cause of these levellers in church and state which they otherwise would want; and, notwithstanding the actions

and utterances of the unknown individual before us, I cannot look upon him without interest and pity."

An umph from old Peter, with a request that his master would go to bed himself, and leave him to take care of the stranger, ended the conversation: Blount went away, —and Noble to his own chamber.

At an early hour on the following morning two odd-looking servants, in sad-coloured suits, mounted and armed, presented themselves at the gate of the vicarage, and inquired "if their master was not there, as from what they had heard at the blacksmith's shed they thought that the gentleman, who had been robbed and wounded beneath the rocks, and was now lying sick in that house, could be no other."

"I don't think you are far wrong," said Peter, as he cocked his eye askew at their long lean faces and their plain liveries of a colour like the cinders in the ash heap. "Like master like man, they say; though it's little I thought that the poor crazy body up stairs had a serving-man to

truss up his points for him. — What do ye call your master?”

“The right worshipful and godly Sir Roger Zouch, an approved voice, a faithful witness, a preacher of the truth, a trier of spirits, a man of war — bold as a lion for his God.”

“Why, then, by my troth,” said Peter, “thy master is here for a certainty, and lieth with a cracked skull in our blue room; and is now telling my good master how he fought last night with beasts from Ephesus, who is listening to him, poor simple kind soul as he is, with as much patience as if it was all sense and gospel.”

“Out upon thee, thou vile churl! talkest thou so of one of Zion’s champions? None of thy gibes and jeers, or it may be thine own crown will feel the weight of my cudgel.” So saying, the elder of the two domestics alighted, and not waiting to be conducted, strode past Peter with a rude thrust, and entered the house.

“A plague o’ thee!” grumbled Peter: “two can play at quarter staff, as I’ll show thee;” and following him into the passage, he slammed the door behind him, and left the other servant

alone with the two horses before the wicket. This last, however, tarrying for no invitation, proceeded deliberately to the stable, and finding it open, introduced his tired beasts to the astonished old mare; took off bridles and saddles; and, plentifully supplying the rack and manger with hay and oats, entered the parson's kitchen, and taking a seat by the dresser demanded of the frightened maids the creature comforts of breakfast.

Old Peter, who had just been witnessing the meeting of master and man above stairs, and whose cross temper had given way to a humour that had been tickled by the quaint scene and the ludicrous speeches, came shaking with laughter into the kitchen; but the tired and hungry groom was in no laughing mood, and soon upset this grinning philosophy by a smart stroke of his whip across his shoulders.

In a moment the old man caught up a broomstick to return the blow; and, though very unequal, either in strength or youth, was standing up manfully against the assault, when the cook, whose spirit was roused by Peter's danger,

dipped her mop in a pail of foul water, and thrusting it into the groom's face, drove him into the yard with dirty cheeks and blinded eyes. The cry of "murder" having been in the mean time screamed forth at the top of her voice by the other maiden, the kitchen was instantly filled with every person in the house; for even Sir Roger Zouch himself, albeit in no seemly garb for appearing in public, descended close after Noble, and stood up in the midst of them rather like a ghost newly risen from the grave than true flesh and blood,—though the stain of the last was indeed sufficiently visible beneath the folds of the bandage about his head.

"How now!" said Sir Roger, in a voice rather more stentorian than might have been expected from the plight in which he had been put to bed the night before, and in a tone of authority as if he had been in his own mansion and with only his own household — "How now! brawlings and fightings: who is the striker, Gabriel Goldworthy?" but before this slow elder had screwed his mouth up to reply, Peter answered in his own blunt fashion, and the cook, in

a shrill voice, chanted an echo to his complaint. Meantime the culprit groom, with a foul face, stood at the yard door as white as a stone with passion, while Sir Roger thus rejoined : —

“ Verily, thou art a trouble to me, Abel, and makest me a reproach among the people where-soever I go : it was only last week, at the hostel of the Pied Bull in Tewksbury, thou didst raise a brawl about thy victuals at the buttery hatch : thou makest a god of thy belly. Remember that man liveth not by bread alone : — a good soldier must endure hardness, and never strike but in battle, and then home. I fear that thou art sensual, an it were not for thy godly grandmother, and this, thy God-fearing uncle Gabriel, the man of my right hand, I would send thee back to thy ditching and delving.”

Abel muttered out that the children of Belial were making a mock of his master, and that he struck Peter in pure zeal for Sir Roger's honour ; this Gabriel affirmed of his own knowledge to be true, and Sir Roger was pacified : but an opportunity of preaching, so favourable as it seemed to his weak judgment, was not to be ne-

glected ; he therefore proceeded to deliver a long rambling discourse on prophecy ; and directed his looks and words with all the persuasive expression that he could possibly command towards the distressed parson and his good wife. He flattered himself that he had brought salvation to that house, and that all which had befallen him was in the order of Providence to that end. He had taken for his text, "Come out of her, my people;" and these words were repeated at the close of every passage, with all the varieties of intonation that his voice admitted. All efforts to induce him to stop or return up stairs till he had finished this wearisome preachment were vain. He stood half an hour with naked feet upon the kitchen stones, and was listened to even by Peter with a wonder so great, and with so painful a sense of his craziness, as forbade even a smile. He closed by so earnestly invoking peace on that house, and enjoining the exhibition of a quiet and an orderly spirit so forcibly upon the offending Abel, that during the rest of the day nothing disturbed the household.

The hardy old Puritan nothing the worse for

this exercise of his lungs, and very little so for the bruise and cut in his encounter with the robbers the evening before, took his seat at Noble's dinner table at noon, and seemed very sensible of the truly Christian hospitality of his host.

As arguments or any appeals to reason would so evidently be thrown away upon a man under the prejudices and delusions of Sir Roger Zouch, Noble dexterously avoided inflaming the mind of his guest with a discussion on grave matters, and led him to speak on other topics. He found that he had travelled a great deal, and had in his youth served in the Low Countries. Upon these subjects he conversed rationally and pleasantly enough; and, as they walked after their meal into the garden, he showed an acquaintance with plants and flowers, and a knowledge of the various methods of laying out a garden, which in so stern a fanatic would seem strange; but what is there so variable, so inconstant, as man? — he is “some twenty several men in every hour;” not that either the dinner or the walk in the garden passed over without sundry

efforts to spiritualise and improve the subjects which those occasions offered. In the garden especially, after talking a while like any other rational and well informed gentleman, he suddenly broke out in a rhapsody about the approaching millennium, and the personal reign of the Messiah upon this earth. His politics were violent; but in this they differed not from many able and patriotic men of the time. Against the church, however, his wrath evidently burned, and he affected to disbelieve the possibility of so pious a minister, as Noble plainly was, being sincerely resolved to remain in her communion. Upon this point, however, Noble was too bold and too honest to conceal his resolutions.

It so happened that the next morning, before Sir Roger Zouch left the parsonage of Cheddar, there came to Noble a summons to attend the Committee of Inquiry into Church Matters, of which old Blount had warned the worthy parson on the evening of his return from Wells. Of this Noble informed his guest, and asked him if, as he saw the name of Zouch among the

commissioners, it was any relation of his? The knight replied in the affirmative, and told Noble not to trouble himself to attend; for that as he was himself going to Axbridge he would make known to the committee his wish that no molestation might be given him. To this Noble would by no means consent, till he had received a solemn promise from Sir Roger that he would not represent him as less opposed to their proceedings against the church than he truly was, or less attached to that sacred institution which they sought to destroy.

Thus was the trial of Noble for another brief season deferred, and the malicious designs and interested hopes of the meddling and hypocritical Daws were for the present disappointed. However, the gold was yet to be put into the fire at the appointed time.

All these circumstances were related by Noble in a letter to his son Cuthbert, exactly as they occurred, with very little comment, and thus, as he rightly judged, they would make a forcible impression on his mind. They did so: a due consideration of them delivered him from some

of his own delusions, and opened his eyes to those of a few of his companions ; and though he was not at all more separated from the Non-conformists, yet he attached himself to the most sober among them.

CHAP. XIX.

In thee, faire mansion, let it rest,
Yet know, with what thou art possest;
Thou entertaining in thy brest
But such a mind, mak'st God thy guest.

BEN JONSON.

WHAT time the primroses were beginning to spread palely over the green and sunny banks in the neighbourhood of Milverton House, in the spring of 1642, the grimed armourers of England were busy in their smoky workshops; and there was no hall in the land, whether private or civic, in which the arms were not taken down from the walls and put in order. Every where notes of preparation were heard, and eyes of settled resolve might be seen.

The House of Commons had petitioned the King for the militia, and they were already active in raising men. Sir Oliver Heywood,

refusing to act in this matter, resigned his office of magistrate and justice of the peace, and took a decided part for the King. But although he had good will to the royal cause, and spoke his sentiments loudly and bitterly, although he was ready to make some personal exertions and some pecuniary sacrifices for his party, he was, as has been observed before, an indolent, self-indulgent old gentleman, a lover of ease and of his own way; methodical in all his habits, and obstinate in all his prejudices. The frequent visits of those hard and active men of business, who were employed to forward the royal cause by negotiating with all the Cavalier gentry for supplies of men and money, before the commission of array was actually issued, disturbed him sadly, and his temper became very irritable. Sir Charles Lambert had been long re-established in his good graces, and to the deep sorrow of Katharine had become once more a constant guest at Milverton. It is true that a great improvement had apparently taken place in his outward conduct, but Katharine disliked, mistrusted, feared him. She saw that

he again entertained hopes of accomplishing his purposes upon her weak father, and of thus obtaining possession of her hand in marriage. It was an inconceivable mystery to her that any human being should desire to be united to another, when aware that his very touch was evaded with a shudder, and that from his gaze the face was averted with loathing.

Some changes had taken place at the Hall within the last year, which had glided away with the swiftness of a shadow. In the January immediately preceding the season of which we are now writing, Mistress Alice had been summoned by that call, which, sooner or later, all must obey, and laid in a peaceful grave: — the snows that fell upon it were not more pure and spotless than had been her kind and innocent life, and her dissolution had been as gentle and as soft as their quick and silent melting.

The family and household were still in their mourning for her; and had any stranger gazed upon Katharine Heywood, as in her sad robes of black she paced the terrace alone with slow and thoughtful steps, he would have wept for

sympathy, and deemed her one of those silent mourners for the dead who refuse to be comforted, and cherish the sweet memory of a vanished image; but it was far otherwise,—her griefs were those of doubt and apprehension about the living. If ever a glance of the mind looked after the departed Alice, it did so with affection and complacency; with a calm joy that she was taken from the evil to come, and with an envy of her quiet tomb. But such movements of impatience at the difficulties of her path and the dreariness of that waste which lay before her in her appointed pilgrimage were never of any long continuance. She knew them to be wicked, and she knew them to be vain: she wore divine and secret armour, and she neither fled nor fainted in her hours of trial. The occasional, though less frequent, visits of George Juxon were a great relief to her,—and Jane Lambert continued to be her constant friend and beloved companion. Over the character of Jane there had come a change, which, though at times it was viewed with serious anxiety by Katharine, did upon the whole suit

far better with those habits of her own soul which care had begotten.

Jane Lambert's eyes, which were used to be lighted up with bright and joyous expression, and a certain lively and winning archness, did now often fill with unbidden tears, or were fixed gravely upon vacancy.

One day, as the friends were walking together in a silent mood, the hand of Katharine resting gently upon the shoulder of Jane, and their steps slow as those of vestals in their groves, Juxon came suddenly upon them in their path; and so deep was the abstraction of both, that he was not seen of either till they met closely.

"I am sorry," he observed, "to break the spell by which you are both bound, but I could not turn back, for I have business with Sir Oliver; however, it was to all seeming a spell so black and melancholy that perhaps it is better broken."

"It is a good omen for us that it is broken by you, Master Juxon, for you are always a prophet of good, and misfortune never makes choice of such a messenger," said Katharine,

with an effort at cheerfulness. Jane, too, suddenly recollecting herself, endeavoured to put on a careless smile, of welcome, but the effort failed her, and she burst into a flood of tears.

Juxon, distressed and affected by the sight, made no reply to Katharine, but stood rivetted to the spot, hesitating whether he should proceed towards the house, and leave Jane to recover herself under the care of her friend, or whether he should remain to render what service he could, by diverting and calming a sorrow, the secret cause of which he fancied that he knew.

Meanwhile, Katharine pressed Jane to her heart, and, covering her from observation, as though she were a child, said, "This is the natural effect of a night without sleep, and a nervous headache: it will do her good; you need not stay with us; we shall do very well, and Jane will be all the brighter for it at supper. You will find my father in the vineyard."

Jane, however, in part relieved by these tears, quickly raised her head, and, with one of her most natural smiles dimpling her wet cheeks, said, "Pray do not let me drive you away: this

is just nothing at all but what my old nurse used to call the mopes and the megrims: there, it is all over; that's one advantage we women have over you lords of the creation; that is, such of us as are not heroines, which I shall never be for one: we may now and then have a good cry; and, take my word for it, it is a fine cure for all nonsenses,—another favourite noun plural of my dear old nurse when I was little and naughty." This flash of affected gaiety did only light up her features, however, for a passing moment, and ere her few words were uttered an air of extreme depression returned upon her.

"Nay, Mistress Jane," said Juxon, "these are no child's tears, neither are they fantastical like the melancholy of your fine lady: the fountain of them is deeper than any of these; you are unhappy. Here, before your noble friend, I must say that I have seen this for a long time: for more than a year I have witnessed with deep pain your altered manners and your failing health. Tell her the sad cause of your

trouble ; pour out your heart to her ; she will safely advise and surely comfort you."

" Really, Master Juxon," replied Jane, " you are a very strange person ; and when you take a fancy into your head you are like good Sir Oliver, and truth would not drive it out again, though spoken by an angel, therefore a poor silly girl like me may not make the attempt."

" For that matter, lady, you can look and speak persuasively as ever angel did : where do you hide your wings ? "

" Wings !—well, really now, if I were a court lady instead of a rustic, and had that magic mirror that hides all freckles, and gives every body that looks into it the face of a beauty, that fine compliment would win my heart ; but as it is, I must e'en be content to walk the earth on two serviceable feet ; on which I shall very soon run from your words and looks, if you do not speak about a more entertaining subject than me and my megrims."

The gravity of her eyes contradicted the gaiety of her lips, as she thus spoke ; and the unuttered wish in the deep recesses of her heart

was, "Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away, and be at rest!"

Juxon looked upon her, for a moment, with a tender manly expression of countenance, in which were blended respectful pity and warm admiration; then turning to Katharine, he changed the subject, and diverted all further attention from Jane by telling the former upon what matter he was seeking Sir Oliver.

"I have just received a letter," said he, "from Oxford, from that fine youth Arthur: it is both conceived and expressed in a spirit worthy the days of chivalry and of a man of mature age. He desires me to urge upon Sir Oliver his brave request, which is, that he may be permitted to come down instantly and take the field with whatever men Sir Oliver can raise for the King's service. He says that it is useless to compel him to remain at the University and pursue his studies in the present distracted state of public affairs, and that his age is not younger than that at which many a person renowned in history has appeared in arms for his country. The reason, it seems, of his preferring this request through

me is, that he has been sharply reprimanded by Sir Oliver for even thinking of it; for he has already decided to place all the horsemen which he can raise under Sir Charles Lambert. Arthur truly observes, that as the infirmities of Sir Oliver now forbid his going to camp himself, it is right that a representative of his name should ride at the head of his tenants and yeomen; and that, although too young for a responsible charge, he can at least share their danger, and set a good example of devotion to the King's service. That he is quite willing to be under the command of Sir Charles Lambert; but that, if his present wish is refused, he will, at the risk of the worthy knight's displeasure, join the banner of the lords Falkland or Carnarvon as a simple volunteer."

To this statement Katharine listened with a generous admiration of the gallant boy, and a hearty approval of his conduct; moreover, she felt that, by this arrangement, she should have a young protector, not only for the family, but whom she could depend upon as a shield from the dreaded importunities of Sir Charles, and

whose presence would take away one of her father's excuses for urging upon her an abhorred connection. Of Arthur's conduct and character she felt sure: he looked up to her with the reverence of a son and the affection of a brother; and though her heart beat with a regretted fondness for another Heywood, a cousin separated from her by fate and fortune, towards this youth Arthur she entertained the composed and quiet affection of a young mother or an elder sister; therefore she rejoiced at the prospect of his return to Milverton, and promised to say every thing to her father which could move him to consent to this proposal.

Juxon now left the ladies, and walked on at a faster pace towards the house.

As soon as he was out of hearing, Katharine took Jane by the hand, and looking steadfastly into her face, said, —

“ My dear, dear friend, it is the privilege of friendship, and it is the enjoined duty of Christians, to weep with those that weep: — Juxon is right — you are unhappy — some se-

cret sorrow is devouring your inward peace — reveal it to me.”

“Nay, Katharine, urge me not:—every heart knoweth its own bitterness—to every one is appointed some inward cross, which is better borne in silence.”

“Yet the sympathy of a friend is as a balm to the wounded spirit—a balm, Jane, which you have often poured gently and sweetly into mine, to the refreshment of my soul and the comfort of my aching heart;—besides, Jane, we must not let our private and inward griefs prey upon and consume our vital strength at a period like the present:—great trials are coming upon us, and severe duties will soon demand all our energies.”

“I know it, beloved Katharine,—and by your side I can meet them all. You are to me, all things: I have nothing on earth but you to whom I can cling: the stream of my heart would run to waste if it might not flow forth on you.”

“Hush! beloved,—hush!—these words are vain,”—and pointing to the blue sky and

the fleecy clouds above them, Katharine silently conveyed to Jane her soft reproof and gentle admonition.

“ I know all that you would say to me,” answered the mournful girl; “ but, when all is said, how much of our present being must ever remain a mystery — sunbeams shine upon our heads, and violets spring beneath our feet — and yet, Kate, the world which this God of love hath created is a scene of misery — you know it is. What have you ever done that your brow should be clouded with sorrow, and your cheek blanched by care —— ”

“ Stop, Jane; for your life, not another word like this : — ‘ they build too low who build below the sky : ’ — a curse is on this earth — a recorded curse — we may not, must not, cannot make a heaven of it : — it is our school, our place of discipline — the infancy of our existence : — what have any of us done, or what can any of us do, that so many countless blessings should be poured upon us? that we should be invited and taught to acquaint ourselves with that Holy One, by whom came truth, pardon, and

peace — through whom we may win an entrance to that heavenly city, where ‘all tears shall be wiped from all faces?’”

A light of hope beamed in her serious eyes as thus she spoke, and Jane beheld it with reverence. The friends walked slowly back towards the house — there was a long pause in their discourse. It was broken by Jane asking, “You surely admit, dear cousin, that there is a vast difference in the fortunes and the trials of mankind?”

“The seeming difference is vast, but not perhaps the real: — we see only the outward aspect of suffering and of prosperity — but the cup of life is mixed.”

“Surely to many, who are prosperous and happy, few trials are appointed: — they are pleasant in their lives, and honoured in their deaths; they appear even upon earth to be the favourites of Heaven.”

“If truly such, my love, their portion in this life will be little thought of; for they will know that in the bosom of Abraham the Lazarus of this world has his high place of honour

as of comfort, and that the fashion of this world passeth away; nay, before the great change comes, one turn of the wheel may bring the loftiest fortunes to the dust, and crush them beneath it; even now, do we not see and hear the preparations of war?"

"There, again, Katharine, — how can we reconcile with the power of a God of love the existence of so dark and terrible a curse as war?"

"It is but one of many forms of death."

"But the miseries in its violent and bloody path ——"

"Are not so great as those of pestilence, or famine, or the hurricane."

"Well, Katharine, why pestilence, or famine, or hurricane? — *why death?* — and *whence sin?*"

"Jane, we know not now — we shall know hereafter; let us not perplex ourselves with doubts and inquiries which none can solve; the origin of evil lies hidden from our eyes; it is a deep thing — enough for us that the Divine champion hath triumphed over sin —

hath plucked the sting from death — and victory from the grave : — in and through him we may all be conquerors.”

“ And can they so conquer if they be not followers of the Lamb ? — and may the followers of the Lamb fight and shed each other’s blood in battle ? ”

“ It is sad, very sad,” rejoined Katharine, with a shudder of her whole frame : “ it seems a stern necessity in the condition of all the kingdoms of this world that they should be defended by the sword. Good men, great men, the holiest servants of Heaven have wielded earthly arms, and the weapons of death : — with his sword and with his bow the father of the faithful led his own household to the combat, — and the virtues of the warrior are the chosen illustrations of those required in the secret conflicts of the Christian.”

“ I know it, Katharine — and that to the spirit of Christian children there must be joined the courage of sacred warriors. Alas ! for me — my heart faints within me — my mind is confused : — I wish I were a man, for then, in the

excitement of these struggles, I could escape those of the closet."

"To suffer, Jane, requires a more enduring courage than to act; and in patient suffering the high constancy of woman's mind hath ever shone most purely: — for the wives of England bitter trials are coming — ours will be light to theirs; and yours, dear girl, as you well know, less heavy than even mine."

"Katharine, you do not know my trial, or you would not speak thus: — not a faithful and suffering wife in all England but I shall envy her the sweetness of her sufferings: it is in storms that we cling most closely to what we love."

"True, fond girl, but remember that they may also divide us from what we love. Still there is a sweet truth in your melancholy words: I think you would be happy united to such a man as Juxon. He is evidently much attached to you; and I think you are not indifferent to him."

"Cousin, he is worthy of a better fortune. He never can be mine."

“What is the meaning of that strong emphasis? Is, then, the secret of your sorrow a concealed attachment to another?”

“Katharine, you see not clearly in this matter; I am pitied by Juxon, not loved.”

“I know not, dear Jane, for what he should pity you; but pity is akin to love.”

“And also to contempt:—Juxon despises me: yes, the pity of one so generous and noble hearted is heavy to bear.”

“Impossible! he knows your sterling worth; he knows that you could not do what was wrong: you utter many things that are idle; but I have heard him warmly express his regard for your frank character; his faith in your high principles, and his fear that you judged others by yourself, and might in the trials of life prove too confiding towards others.”

“Have you, indeed, Kate? what, lately?”

“Yes; not many days ago.”

“Well, this is comfort; for I love him passing well:—keep my secret, Katharine; you know not how faithfully I have kept yours.” As Jane Lambert thus spoke, she took the hand of her

fair cousin and pressed it against her beating heart. Katharine drew it away with a sudden agitation, and placing it on her pale forehead seemed to muse awhile: her eyes wore the expression of one that was wildly busy over the mysterious tablets of her memory; at last, fixing them on Jane with a troubled gaze, "I have it," she said: "a light flashes on me; the interview with Francis: it was observed by some one; it was known to Juxon, and you have borne ——"

"Nothing that I would not bear again for the love of Katharine, and for her peace of mind."

"Noblest of beings, alas! how am I punished for having thus employed you! why did you not tell me all? May God forgive me! I never can forgive myself."

"Talk not thus," said Jane, rushing into her arms. "This moment richly repays whatever I have suffered: that which I may now safely relate to you you could not have borne at the time, nor should I tell it even now, if it were not that I know you will be seeking some explanations from Juxon."

The generous girl now gave a minute narration of all that had passed between herself and Francis at their interview. She told how very deeply she had been affected by the devotion with which he spoke of Katharine, and by those looks and gestures which revealed the constancy and the ardour of his love : the action so passionate towards her, upon whom his mind's eye was inwardly resting, with which Francis had parted from herself, was not forgotten. The circumstance of her immediately after meeting with Juxon, and the scene which passed between them, were described with the like fidelity.

A paleness as of marble overspread the face of Katharine ; her eyes assumed a vacant regard ; her hand became cold, and from her moving lips no sound was audible. She stood a while like one suddenly turned to stone ; and Jane, expecting her every instant to swoon away, supported her in trembling terror. It seemed an age of agony to Jane, though the trance did not last more than three awful minutes. The eyelids of Katharine closed ; tears glittered on the long dark lashes ; warmth and consciousness

returned. She slowly opened her eyes; and, fixing them on Jane with an affection no words could convey, suffered herself to be led back in unbroken silence to the mansion.

CHAP. XX.

'T is *jest* to tell a people that they 're free :
Who or *how many* shall their *masters* be
Is the sole doubt.

COWLEY.

BEFORE the walls of Hull, in Yorkshire, King Charles was first made sensible that the powers and the prerogatives of the crown were already usurped by the Parliament. Sir John Hotham shut the gates of the city, and refused to admit the small force by which the King was attended.

The governor stood upon the wall, and the King, who had appointed him to that office of trust, sat upon his horse beneath, and heard a sickening protestation of loyalty to his person, while the guards, to whom he intrusted its defence, were treated as the enemies of his throne and kingdom. Here began that artful distinction, whereby the Parliamentarians professed to

keep garrisons and raise soldiers in the name of the King, while they opposed his wishes and resisted his authority.

They had already taken from the King the power of the militia; and having compelled him to throw himself on the support of the private gentry, the flame of civil war was soon kindled.

At the time when his Majesty was thus repulsed by Sir John Hotham, he was surrounded by a small company of gallant gentlemen, who had formed themselves into a body guard; and he found himself, in a province remote from his capital, without a regiment, without money to raise one, and without a single garrison or company of soldiers in all England receiving his pay or acknowledging the royal orders: the navy, the ordnance, stores, magazines, and the revenue, were in the keeping of the Parliament. His sole dependence was on the loyalty, the courage, and the resources of the country gentlemen of England.

The midland counties were for the most part subjected to the influence of the Parliament, and lay too near the city of London to resist or

even dispute the commands of that powerful assembly.

This body was no sooner apprised of the conduct of Hotham, and informed that he had been proclaimed a traitor by the King, than they openly justified the conduct of that governor, and soon after publicly voted "that the King intended to levy war against the Parliament." This declaration was followed by active preparations for war on both sides; but the advantages for commencing it were greatly on the side of the Parliament; and the gentry in the west, and more especially in the northern counties, were, at first, disheartened by the evident distraction of the King's counsel, and the gloomy aspect of his affairs.

Therefore, in Yorkshire, though many promises were given, few troops were raised; and if Shropshire and Wales had not been animated by a more lively hope, and a warmer zeal, no royal army could ever have appeared in the field.

Meanwhile the levies for the Parliament were very successful, and men came in as fast as they

could be received and armed. In addition to these volunteers, the rustics drawn for the militia were compelled to join their corps, and were put under the training of such officers as could be found.

In July, the Parliament voted the Earl of Essex their general of foot, and appointed the Earl of Bedford the commander of their horse; and early in August declared themselves necessitated to take arms and to commence hostilities.

These vigorous measures inspired their partisans throughout the kingdom with a resolute spirit, and in London not a voice was openly lifted up for the King.

As early as the month of May, Francis Heywood had procured his services to be accepted as captain of a troop of horse under Sir John Balfour, and was by him immediately appointed an instructor or sergeant-major * of cavalry.

At such a moment, the zeal of Cuthbert

* The titles of Sergeant-Major, and Sergeant-Major-General, at that period, correspond with Adjutant-Major and Adjutant-General of our times.

Noble would not suffer him to remain behind, while so many were taking arms for the great, and, as he thought, holy cause, of liberty. He did not find it difficult, through the favour of a friend, to obtain the grade of lieutenant in a company of foot; and he set forth on a fine morning in June to join a regiment then assembled in quarters at the town of St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, for training.

His finances did not admit of more than a very humble equipment,—accordingly he was mounted on a low shambling pony, across which he had also placed the saddle bags containing his better gear, his Bible, and two or three violent pamphlets of the day against prelacy and the divine right of kings.

Notwithstanding the heat of his opinions, and his hearty concurrence in the measures of the Parliament, Cuthbert, in his lonely hours, was of that serious and solemn temper of mind, that he could not but reflect on the step he was now taking with more than his wonted gravity.

That his present course would be distressing to his father he well knew; but he silenced this

whisper of his better angel with the consideration that his father was old, timid, and averse to change, rather from early prejudices and associations than from the light of conscience and the use of right reason.

Again, with that obliquity of mind with which men who are in fact taking their own way wish to think it that appointed by Providence, he ran over all the texts of Scripture then in the mouths of the Roundheads, as justifying their appeal to arms, and silenced all the lingering remonstrances that yet struggled in his bosom with those inapplicable words of Holy Writ, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

Having thus, by forcibly wresting a quotation from Scripture, served his immediate purpose, and given freedom and tranquillity to his spirit, he suffered his imagination to dress out the duties of military life in all their most sacred glory. The language of the Old Testament, and that of the profane authors with which he was familiar, were called up in a strange confusion to gild the prospect before him,—and

now a song of triumph from his Bible, now a quotation from Homer, was sounding on his lips, and ere he was aware was kindling a vain and unholy ambition :—a secret and impious persuasion of the favour and approval of Heaven filled him with a swelling anticipation of coming victories and high rewards. He resolved that the virtues of the Spartan or the Roman soldier should in his person be combined with the ardour and the holiness of the most chosen warriors of Israel.

He saw not the lean and sorry nag beneath him ; he thought not of those weary marches which he should have to make afoot, when the miserable jade on which he was now sitting astride his saddle bags should be stumbling along stony or miry ways in a train of baggage horses ; but he pictured out a future in which he should ride among the princes of the people, and in marches of triumph.

From this dream of his fancy he was suddenly and very effectually awakened by feeling the animal, which he was riding, sink under him with an uneasy motion ; and, before he could

possibly prevent it, he found the water of a considerable stream, which he was then fording, above his knees, and his saddle bags thoroughly soaked through. The beast had his own notions of enjoyment as well as his dreamy rider ; and, as the day was hot, the road was dusty, and his burden sufficiently oppressive, had taken this very seasonable refreshment.

Nature suddenly asserted her power over the precise young Puritan ; and, to the scandal of all his late professions, he gave vent to his wrath in certain violent and unseemly phrases which would not have disgraced the most accomplished swearer among the wild Cavaliers of that time. These oaths were but the accompaniments of sundry hard blows with a cudgel, kickings with the heel, and jerks of the rein, by dint of which the nag, unable to rebuke him for his injustice, was compelled to rise and go forward. The accident was in itself sufficiently provoking ; and the irritation of Cuthbert was increased by encountering on the bank an old beggar with a wooden leg, who, tossing his staff pike fashion, loudly asked his alms for an old crippled soldier

done up in the wars ; and, thrusting his tongue in his cheek, eyed his foolish plight with a merry satisfaction, which he could not conceal.

“ Out upon thee ! ” said Cuthbert, “ for an old drunken impostor : — such fellows as you tippling bawlers of ballads are the curse of the land ; — go scrape your cracked fiddle for sots on the ale bench, and don’t trouble honest men on their road.”

“ The lie in thy throat, thou prick-eared canting Roundhead ! ” replied the old soldier : — “ thou foul-mouthed hypocrite ! is it for thou to rate sinners after rattling out oaths like a shameless brawler in a bear garden ? I am a cleaner spoken man than thou, blessings on him who taught me, and more honest than to play traitor to my king : — God bless his gracious Majesty ! I wish him no better luck than that all the Roundheads, militia, and train-bands, horse and foot, were just such a set of raw awkward spoonies as yourself.”

While he was yet speaking, Cuthbert’s jade, as if moved by the very spirit of mischief, shook her ears and was down in the middle of the loose

dusty road, without better warning than before ; for the attention of Cuthbert being quite taken up by his anger with the old soldier, he was again too late to prevent it. The dust plentifully adhered to his legs, thighs, and saddle bags. He instantly dismounted in a rage, kicked the beast up again, drove it forward, and, turning short round upon the old man, in a fury, said, —

“ If it were not for your age and grey hairs, you insolent old vagabond, I would rap your pate smartly with my cudgel.”

“ That were easier spoken than done,” rejoined the old man, holding his quarter staff lightly in a defensive posture.

A little dog, which accompanied the old man, perceiving by these actions, and by the loudness of their speech, that the stranger was quarrelling with his master, flew at Cuthbert with a sharp and angry bark, than which perhaps nothing does more inflame the rising choler ; he, therefore, struck at the little animal furiously, and the end of his cudgel inflicted on it a sharp stroke,

which sent it howling and yelping behind its master.

The old soldier, without a moment's loss of time, resented this injury by so heavy and well placed a blow on the head of Cuthbert, that his steeple-crowned hat was knocked off; and had it not been defended within by the strong bars of iron with which it had been recently fitted for the wars, he would have gotten a severe bruise.

"He that touches my dog touches me," said the old man: "I am sorry that I did not make thee feel it." The quarter staff of the beggar had, by his stumbling and over-reaching himself, flown out of his hand, and his old rabbit-skin cap had fallen upon the ground: — a fine polished head thinly strewn with grey hairs lay bare and exposed. — "There, you may crack it if you will now," he added, raising the ineffectual defence of his arm.

"I am a man," said Cuthbert, "and not a brute: I would not strike thee for all my hot words; but I have been beside myself with passion. May God forgive me for my great

offence against him — and do you forgive me for the hard things I said to you, and the stroke I gave your dog.

So speaking, he picked up the old man's quarter staff and his cap, and gave them into his hands; at the same time taking a piece of silver out of his pocket, he tendered it with a look of good will — but the soldier would not take it.

“It would do me no good,” said he: “I should have no luck with it, and could never relish the bread or beer it bought me.”

“Then lay it out in dog's meat, friend: thy poor cur will have forgotten my rude blow before thou hast forgiven my uncomfortable words: — you wo'n't go to sleep in ill will with me, I hope.”

“No, I shan't do that,” rejoined the aged beggar, — “the good old parson of Cheddar taught me better than that, — and I minds what he said as if it were yesterday — God bless him! — church and king for ever, say I. — I wo'n't have your money.”

Surprized and startled by this strange and

unexpected mention of his father, Cuthbert drew from the old man the whole story of his adventure at Cheddar, and his interview with Noble.

He listened with deep emotion to the narrative, and recognised in all the circumstances the internal evidence of its truth, from its exact correspondence with the character of his father's mind and heart, and those large and tolerant notions which he had always taught and carried out into practice.

"I know that good parson well," said Cuthbert, "and love him like a father."

"Do you indeed?—then I'll take your money, and give you hearty thanks for it.—But I say, young master, if you knows the parson of Cheddar so well, it's my belief your taking the wrong road:—a man can't serve two masters—without you do call God and the king two; and he that serves God first, and king the next after, must always be right, as I have heard say from the time I was the height of this quarter staff."

Cuthbert gave him two pieces, and walked

on in a humbled and in no satisfied frame of mind.

His poor beast, like a patient packhorse, was quietly browsing by the road-side at no great distance, and Cuthbert drove it before him, not caring to mount again till the sun and air had dried his wet breeches and hose.

The pettiness of the mortification which had moved him to such ungovernable anger was now lost in the most gloomy reflections on the sin of having so greatly dishonoured the commandments of God by cursing and swearing. Though naturally of a warm temper, he had never been at all addicted to the odious use of vulgar oaths, and for awhile he began to doubt the sincerity of his faith, and to imagine that the whole work of religion must be entered upon as a new thing.

Again, the very strange circumstance of his father's image being brought before him in a manner so unexpected, by a way-side beggar, and the lesson of charity, and the solemn monition to turn back from the party which he had

chosen, conveyed by so lowly an instrument, perplexed his reason and staggered his resolution.

But the die was cast, the step was taken, and it was impossible for him, even if willing, to recede without disgrace. He ran over in his mind all the wrongs and the oppressions which had been committed in the name and with the sanction of the King. He recalled the sufferings of Prynne and his companions. He remembered the tyrannical imposition of ship money; the noble resistance to that measure by Hampden, now himself in arms; the violence towards the Scots; the articles exhibited against the five members; and, more than all, he considered that, if the King should conquer in the impending struggle, the despotic rule of the crown would be established more firmly than ever; the hateful tribunal of the Star Chamber would be again erected; prelacy, armed with new powers, would rear its mitre on the ruins of religious liberty; and all those abuses in church and state, which had called forth the famous Remonstrance of the Commons, and the

Petition of Rights founded on it, would most certainly be restored.

As these considerations passed through the mind of Cuthbert, he felt shame that he could for a moment have doubted the righteousness of the cause in which he had embarked. What was the little incident, which had so discomposed and ruffled him, when it was stripped naked? His nag had lain down in the water, and he had got a wetting. He should have laughed it off, and so he would have done but for wounded pride. He was conscious of the poverty of his equipment, and yet more so of his unmilitary appearance;—that the witness of his accident should mock him, and be an old soldier to boot, was more than he could bear. He finally resolved all that had passed into a hellish temptation of the evil one to divert him from the path of Christian duty; and thus comforting himself, and speaking peace to his heart, with a very slight repentance for his plain transgression of God's law, he recovered his serenity. He now mounted his nag, and cheerfully pursued his way till the fine massive tower of St.

Alban's Abbey reminded him that he was near the place of his destination. He stopped under a shady tree a little off the road; brushed off the marks of his foolish misadventure; adjusted his dress; buckled the belt of his rapier more tightly, and rode into the town with a wish that he might escape present observation, and get soon housed. But it so chanced that in the narrow entrance of the very first street in St. Alban's Cuthbert met the whole garrison marching forth to exercise. The leading rank of musketeers, forming the advanced guard, filled the width of the street from house to house on either side of the way; therefore he was forced to stop, and placing his pony close to the wall that he might prove as small an obstacle as possible, saw the whole force pass him, and attracted the attention of them all. At any other time, and under other circumstances, he would have gazed upon the military show with a natural pleasure, and as it was, he looked upon them with much curiosity; but his position was very uncomfortable; and he felt small as they filed by with a strong and

measured tread, keeping time to a few loud drums and piercing fifes.

Several divisions of foot, composed of musketeers and pikemen in equal proportions, and each led by a mounted officer, and with their appointed number of captains, lieutenants, and sergeants, followed each other in succession; but there was a great difference in their equipment and bearing.

The three leading divisions, amounting to nearly nine hundred effective men, were a fine sample of the very best infantry which had as yet been formed under the orders of the Parliament. Their clothing was of a coarse red cloth: the belts and bandaliers of those who were armed with muskets were of buff leather; and a girdle of double buff, eight inches broad, was worn under the skirts of the doublet. The musketeers also wore black steeple-crowned hats, with small but strong bars of iron fastened under the felt. In addition to their muskets and rests, they were all provided with a good stiff tuck, not very long, so fixed in the belt as not to swing or incommode them.

The pikemen were furnished with good pikes, eighteen feet in length, with small steel heads, and good stiff tucks like those of the musketeers. They had also for defensive armour iron head pieces, with back and breast pieces of the same quality, pistol-proof, and each man was provided with a good long buff glove for the left hand ; they also wore the broad buff girdle ; the musketeers had bands about their hats of a considerable width, finished in front with a rose of orange cloth, but they had no feathers or plumes ; and there was a steadiness and severity in their whole aspect which commanded admiration. It was one of the first regiments embodied, composed principally of a better order of volunteers, and commanded by a very strict and experienced officer. From these men Cuthbert had nothing to suffer : they were silent in their ranks ; and merely glanced at him as they passed with looks of gloomy or proud indifference ; but the regiment that followed was a raw levy of militiamen just raised : they had arms, indeed, and were divided already into musketeers and pikemen, like those who preceded them ; but

their clothing and equipment was very incomplete, and few of the pikemen had either back or breast pieces. Of these, numbers had been drawn, reluctantly, from the neighbouring villages, to supply the quota of men required by the militia act, and were enrolled with the mockery of an oath, by which they were sworn in, to fight "*for the King against the King*," — a distinction which of course the greater part of them could not understand. They only wanted to be left alone, and suffered to follow their ploughs in peace. Most of them had some excuse to offer in the Shire Hall, and some story to tell why they should not go for soldiers. This man had aged parents to support; another had a family of children; and that man had just married a wife. Others, who were not provided with such good excuses, feigned deafness, bad eyes, lame shoulders, weak ankle bones, fits, rheumatic pains, or some other disqualification, to escape the irksome duties of praying and fighting under Puritan commanders. Many kissed their own thumbs instead of the Bible when they took their oaths of service, meaning to desert the

first opportunity that offered ; still there were numbers of idle rustics who came when they were called out, and did as they were bid, without further question ; and these, in spite of their officers and sergeants, and Puritan comrades, contrived their own amusements, and laughed at the grave preachments which forbade them.

As a file of these young swains passed Cuthbert, one struck the end of a lighted match under his pony's tail ; and to the astonishment of Cuthbert, and the disturbance of the whole division following, the poor animal, hitherto as lazy and patient as a laden donkey, began kicking with such sudden activity and vigour, that the rider had some difficulty in keeping his seat. However, though inwardly vexed, Cuthbert stuck close to the saddle, and putting a good face on the vexatious incident disarmed the laughter which was at first generally excited by joining in it himself, till a humane sergeant plucked away the burning cause of the animal's pain and terror, — and the frightened beast stood still, trembling and in a bath of sweat. Until this moment

Cuthbert was at a loss to know what had so alarmed his pony; but he now alighted and made a complaint about what had been done to an officer that was passing.

The grave personage whom he addressed said, with a sly smile, — “Verily, friend, thy little garron was in the way, and I counsel thee to patience in this matter: — there is no harm done, and verily thou didst stick to thy saddle like a sergeant-major of cavalry.”

Without waiting for any rejoinder, the officer marched on; and no sooner had the infantry defiled, than the shrill tones of a few trumpets announced the advance of four troops of horse. As these fine men walked their powerful animals along the street, they cast down looks of contempt upon poor Cuthbert and his little hack; and he could not but feel that he had never as yet rightly conceived what were the naked realities of soldiership. There were far more unpleasant and painful experiences to come than the petty mortifications of this his first contact with troops. However, he had a wise, generous, and noble friend to instruct and arm

his mind in the path on which he had entered; and his spirit was now in its first moment of weakness and need sustained and comforted by his appearance.

Immediately in the rear of this body of horse rode an officer admirably mounted and equipped, and beneath his polished helmet Cuthbert instantly recognised Francis Heywood. By this old campaigner his position was seen and understood at a glance. He stopped, shook hands with him heartily, and desiring him to find out his quarter at the house of a brewer in the next street, bade him give his baggage pony in charge to his batman, and occupy his apartment till the exercise should be over.

This was so great a lift and recovery to the sinking spirits of Cuthbert that he had no sooner put up his pony than he turned back and followed the troops to the plain where they were drawn out.

It was a fine sight to the unaccustomed eye to watch the evolutions of the musketeers and the pikemen, as the former advanced to skirmish and cover the movements of the more solid

body, and again as they rapidly retired, and, kneeling down in front of the close array of pikemen, awaited under the protection of their long pikes to receive the charge of cavalry, and repulse it with a close and steady fire.

The sunbeams glittered on the steel heads of the tall pikes, and were reflected in a blaze from the breast and back pieces and the iron head pieces of the dragoons and the pikemen. The rolling of the drums, and the blasts of trumpets, gave animation to the movements of the various divisions; and as the dragoons and musketeers were furnished with a few rounds of blank or practice cartridge in their bandaliers, the mimic show of battle or the rehearsal of a scene of death was with the more select divisions very complete.

The words of command were given and repeated in loud firm tones; and there was no lack with some of these stout Puritan commanders of oaths, peculiar, indeed, to themselves, but as earnest and as blasphemous as those of any profane swearer in the royal army. For instance, to the dismay of Cuthbert, he heard a voice of

thunder directed against a dull but godly lieutenant of the very regiment which he was come to join with such a mild rebuke as, "The Lord deliver thee to Satan, Master Whitefoot, for a blockhead: dost thou not know thy right hand from thy left?" — "Face to the left, man," was the concluding roar, "and slope thy partisan."

However, though our young Puritan lieutenant was a little astounded at the chance of being soon subject to such rude addresses, he had good sense enough to feel that men ought to know their right hands from their left, and that it must be very provoking to a commanding officer, and very perplexing and dangerous for others as well as themselves, if they did not; but he was, nevertheless, a little startled and shocked at so violent and sinful a misapplication of Scripture.

However, he considered that the repulsive infirmities of the few ought not to outweigh the solid piety and the devoted patriotism of the great leaders of the Parliamentary levies; and wisely resolving always to remember his right hand from his left, he joined Francis after the

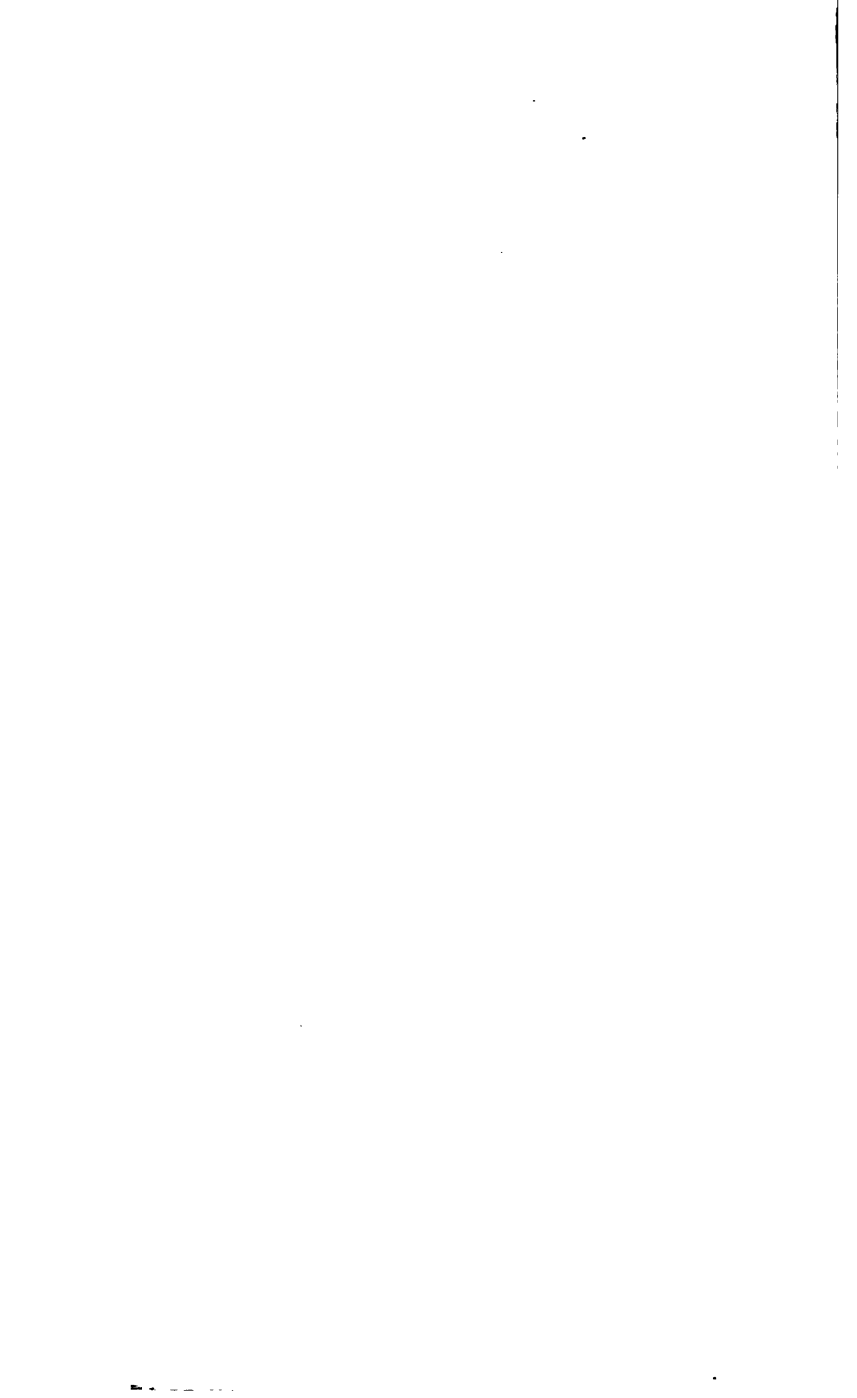
exercise of the day was over, and passed an evening in his society with a more deep and rational delight in it than he had ever before experienced during their previous intercourse.

Francis gave him so much sensible advice in trifles, as well as in matters of moment, at his entrance on this new and strange course of life, that when Cuthbert lay down to rest all his difficulties seemed to have vanished. He had been introduced by Francis to the commander of the regiment he was to join, and to several other officers of horse as well as foot; and he soon discerned that there was as great a variety of character and of manners in this host of the Lord as in armies assuming a less presumptuous title..

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THE
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VOL. II.



THE BROKEN FONT.

CHAPTER I.

And now, good morrow to our waking soules,
Which watch not one another out of feare.

DONNE.

THE noble spirit of Katharine Heywood was severely exercised by those disclosures of Jane Lambert which have been related in a former chapter.

She regretted, too late, that she had ever asked that true-hearted girl to perform an office so difficult in itself, and which had proved, in its consequences, so hazardous to her reputation and her peace. The chance of such a misfortune as that which had befallen Jane never remotely presented itself to her mind at the moment when she made the request, yet she

could not but feel compunction as she reflected on the trouble to which the generous constancy of a delicate mind had subjected her affectionate friend. One slight reparation was in her power. It became her plain duty to undeceive the mind of Juxon on the subject; and the thought that she should be thus instrumental in bringing together two fine characters, formed for each other, made all selfish considerations about her own sorrow, and every pang which her maidenly pride must suffer, vanish before that proper resolution.

No opportunity of speaking in private with Juxon occurred on the evening of Jane's disclosure to Katharine, nor did any offer itself until the arrival of her young cousin Arthur from Oxford. It was a mournful trial to Katharine to observe the high and joyous spirits of the ardent youth, as he embraced and thanked Sir Oliver for acceding to his request. The silent house became suddenly full of cheerful echoes as the brave boy passed to and fro on its oaken staircase and along the pleasant gallery, singing snatches of loyal songs, or making his

spurs jingle as he ran. All his preparations for the solemn work of war were made with a light heart, and with little or no consideration that fellow-countrymen were to be his enemies. Such little sympathy as the boy once felt for the tortured Prynne existed no longer for any one of that party, which he had learned to look upon as traitors.

One would have thought that he was volunteering in a foreign expedition, by his gay-hearted alacrity in getting ready.

"Cousin Kate," said he, turning towards her as they sat at breakfast in the hall, "you must make us a couple of King's rosettes,—and I hope you have both of you," he added, looking at Jane Lambert, "nearly finished embroidering the small standard for our troop:—you have laughed at me, and called me boy, Jane; but when I bring you back your own embroidery, stained with the blood of traitors, you shall reward me as a man."

"I am not so very blood-thirsty, Arthur," said Jane Lambert, "as to wish it shed to do honour to my embroidery; and if I see you

come safe back with your sword bright and a peace branch in your hand, I will tell a fib for you, and call you a man before your beard comes. Now don't frown — it does not become your smooth face : —when all is over, you shall play the part of a lady in the first court masque, and shall wear my rose-coloured gown."

"Why, Jane," said Sir Oliver, "what is come to you, girl? It was but five minutes ago that I saw you with your kerchief at your eyes, looking as sad as though you were sitting at a funeral; and now thou mockest poor Arthur, as if he were a vain boaster, instead of a gallant boy, as thou well knowest.—Never mind her, Arthur: she is a true woman, and teazes those most whom she loves the best. She will cry peccavi to thee a few weeks hence, and suffer thee to give her a full pardon in honest kisses."

"Marry, Sir Oliver," said Jane, smiling, "you will spoil the boy, an you talk thus to him."

"She shall not wait so long for my pardon," said the good-tempered Arthur, with quickness; and rising from his seat, he went to Jane, and,

with the permitted familiarity of boyhood and cousinship, he gave her a kiss. "There," he added: "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. 'To-morrow' is a word I never liked, and it is a season which I may never find. Now, remember, if I should have the ill luck to be cut down by the sword of a traitor, I die in peace with you, dear coz, and forgive you for your merriment beforehand."

"She will not be merrier, Arthur, than she is now," said Katharine; "and to say truth, the very thought is enough to make us sad, if we were not melancholy already:—but I must not hear, my dear father, of your going to the field. It will be at the cost of your life, and that, too, without your having the satisfaction to be of use."

"An example, Kate, must always be of service, if it be a good one; and though I never stood opposite a shotted cannon hitherto, methinks, to do that once by the side of my King would make the short remnant of my life all the brighter for it. Besides, my dear girl, for all the talk which these Parliament men make

about their levies, let the country gentlemen of the western counties arm in right earnest, and the loyal cavaliers of England will make these praying rogues bend the knee and cry out for quarter."

"To be sure they will," said the excited Arthur: "I will bring cousin Jane a live specimen of the genuine round-headed rebel, with his hands tied behind him, and the whites of his eyes where the pupils should be."

At this moment Juxon entered the hall from Old Beech:—he caught the last sentence; and putting one hand on Arthur's shoulder, as he gave the other to Sir Oliver.—"Remember, my young master," he said, "that thy game must be caught before it can be cooked, at least so says the cookery book in my old housekeeper's room; and, believe me, you will find a day's fighting with these Parliament boys rather harder work than a morning's hare-hunting, and little game bagged at the close of it."

"Why, George Juxon! this from you!" said Sir Oliver. "Why, you are the very last man that I expected to hear croak in this fashion."

Why, I expect to see the vagabonds turn tail, before a charge of well mounted cavaliers, like a flock of sheep."

"You could not see such a runaway flight with greater pleasure than I should; but take my word for it, the King's enemies are made of sterner stuff than you give them credit for. Many a great spirit is reckoned among their leaders; and of the meaner folk that follow them numbers have put their hearts into the cause, under a notion that it is that of the people. No, sir, Arthur will act in these troubles, I am well assured, with the same manliness of spirit with which he wrote to you from Oxford, and, therefore, I do not wish to hear him talk like a school boy."

Arthur coloured with a little confusion at this grave rebuke; but, with the frank grace of a generous spirit, confessed himself to have spoken idly, and to be wrong; excusing it, at the same time, by saying, that he was only vapouring so to plague Jane Lambert a little, who, he verily believed, to be in love with one of the rebels. The eyes of Katharine fell, and

her gaze was fixed silently upon the ground, and a slight contraction of her brow showed to Jane how very keenly she was suffering. It was not possible, at the moment, to leave the table without an abruptness which must, of necessity, attract notice, or she would have done so; but Jane, with a ready cheerfulness, replied, "Perhaps I am: now, guess for me, most noble cavalier, whether my Puritan suitor be tall or short; young or old; how many hairs grow on his chin; whether his cheeks be red and white, like summer apples; how much buff it may take to make him a war coat; and if he do not wear high boot heels and jingling spurs for bravery?"

The fine temper of Arthur enabled him to take this playful raillery of Jane's as pleasantly as it was meant; and Sir Oliver came to the boy's aid, observing, "The sly maiden is laughing at us both, Arthur; and it is too true that I must have a broad seam let into my old buff coat. — See thou have it done quickly," said he, "Philip," turning to the old serving man behind his chair.

The announcement, however, which Sir Oliver had before made of his intentions, confirmed by the order thus gaily given, seemed to take away the old man's breath; for to old Philip none of these sad changes were matters for laughter.

Juxon did not discourage these intentions of Sir Oliver for the present: he had satisfied his own mind that the family must, of necessity, soon quit the mansion at Milverton for a season. The spirit in Warwick and in Coventry was decidedly favourable to the cause of the Parliament; and although many of the gentlemen and yeomen in the country villages declared for his Majesty, yet whatever men could be raised under the commission of array would, of course, be marched away. However, it was agreed among the gentry, that the King should be invited to show himself in the county, and that some effort should be made to arouse the loyalty and enlist the feelings of the people in his quarrel. Should this fail, they all looked to Nottingham or Shrewsbury as favourable rallying points for the Royalists.

In the mean time secret preparations were made for concealing or removing valuable effects, and for transporting families and households, when the approach of the parliamentary forces should render it no longer safe for the more distinguished and wealthy of the Royalists to remain in their stately homes.

The conversation at the breakfast table at Milverton was changed from the jocular mood of the moment to a graver tone.

The news of the day,—the last movements of the King,—the rumours of his approach,—conjectures of his reception,—by turns engaged the attention of all, and were discussed between Juxon and Sir Oliver with earnestness and forethought.

The calm clear judgment of George Juxon made him look far on to consequences; and Sir Oliver, conscious of his own deficiency of information, and of the indolence of his inquiries, deferred more readily to the opinions of Juxon than obstinate men are found willing to do in general.

When the party rose and quitted the hall,

Katharine, under the pretence of asking Juxon's advice about packing a valuable picture, led him to the gallery alone, while Arthur and Jane Lambert were settling their playful quarrel upon the terrace.

At the far end of the gallery was a windowed niche, with an antique seat of carved oak. Katharine sat down, and entreating the attention of Juxon to something of consequence, which it was her desire to impart to him, he placed himself on the bench by her side.

"You must be at a loss, Master Juxon, I fear, thoroughly to understand our dear friend, Jane Lambert."

"It is true — she is a very strange girl."

"Yes, strangely excellent: her idle words and idle ways do veil a character of rare and precious worth."

"I would fain think so, lady; but I do sometimes fear that she is of a nature too open and too free for this hollow world. Already, to my thought, she is unhappy from this very cause: whatever may be her sorrow, I wish she would confide it to you."

“ I have discovered it.”

“ Can it be possible? If so, I am truly happy to think that she will have a friend, whose maidenly reserve and heavenly wisdom may guide her through all dangers and difficulties in safety.”

“ Ah! there’s the pang; ’twas I betrayed her to them.”

“ You wrong yourself, lady, — I am convinced you do. I am afraid that I can make a better guess at what causes the melancholy of Jane Lambert than you can; however, I do not feel at liberty to speak more plainly.”

“ I tell you it was I who placed her in the painful perplexity in which you once surprised her. The gentleman from whom you saw her part was an unhappy relative of mine: mine was the errand she was doing; mine was the secret that she kept with so noble a constancy: — that gentleman was nought to her.”

“ Indeed! was he not her lover?”

“ No: would he were! and yet the wish were selfish, and not kind, for she loves another.”

“ I am utterly confused : — how much have my suspicions wronged her : — she is a generous girl ; — how can I have been so deceived ? And yet the gallant kissed her hand upon his knees.”

“ I know it ; but even in that action he only charged her with his homage to another : she was but love’s messenger.”

“ Lady, I am troubled in my thoughts at this sad business : it is plain I wronged her ; plain that she is constant as a star to friend or to lover. What she has done in friendship may well command my lasting admiration. You tell me that she loves. Why is her lover unknown and un-avowed ? What is his condition ? Where is he ? What barriers divide their fortunes and their hopes ?”

“ One only — he knows not of her love.”

“ Whoever he may be, wherever he may dwell, in ignorance of such a vast possession as such a woman’s love — methinks, lady, it is your duty, your solemn and sweet duty, to make it known to him. I envy you the joy : let me be the bearer of your words or letter ; so shall I some atonement make for my unworthy suspicions of her danger.”

“ You forget — these are no times for lovers’ vows; these are no times for marrying and giving in marriage: such knowledge might depress the object of her love with care: — to see happiness offered to our heart’s want, and then, in the self-same instant, wrested from us by the iron hand of war, and scared away by the blast of discord, is to make acquaintance with a sorrow which, by ignorance, we might have escaped.”

“ I think not with you, lady: it were pity for any man to die in his first field unconscious of such a blessing.”

“ As I have a human heart, I can conceive of such a feeling, and like the noble thought. — Long may you live, Master Juxon, to prove how well Jane Lambert loves you !” So saying, Katharine rose and left the gallery.

Juxon remained fixed where he sat, in a state of mind which no language could faithfully depict. His heart swelled; his eyes became dim; and as the blinding tears fell fast away, the first object on which they rested was the figure of Jane Lambert, walking under the shade of

the lime-trees alone. He went down to join her in a tumult of rapture; but before he reached the end of the avenue the reflection crossed him, "What am I about to do? what am I about to utter? This is no moment, this is no mood, in which, for the first time, to address her as a lover. Katharine said true, 'These are no times for lovers' vows.' 'For better' I would have her mine, but not 'for worse.' She shall know no misery that I can shield her from now, as a friend; and when peace smiles on my country once more, may God then join our hands, as even now our hearts!"

CHAP. II.

Thus would I teach the world a better way,
For the recovery of a wounded honour,
Than with a savage fury, not true courage,
Still to run headlong on.

MASSINGER.

THERE is no earthly consolation under sorrow of a more noble kind than that of witnessing and of promoting the happiness of those whom we know to deserve our affection. Katharine had not experienced for a long time a feeling of joy so true as that, with which, in the solitude of her chamber, she reflected upon what had just passed between herself and Juxon. She saw him go out, with hasty steps, towards the avenue where Jane was walking alone, and she rightly interpreted that check and change of his resolutions which made him turn suddenly away. But she determined that the work which

she had begun should not be left long incomplete, and that Jane Lambert should at once know of the revelation which she had made to Juxon that morning. She regretted having uttered a syllable during their interview which could operate to discourage Juxon from an immediate avowal of the impression which Jane's conduct had made upon his heart. Most true it was that, in the present posture of public affairs, it could not be advisable for any one, and more especially for a clergyman, to enter into the state of matrimony, and it was a melancholy thing to form engagements which might never be fulfilled. Here, however, she could not but admit there was room for an exception to the common rules of prudence. Juxon and Jane Lambert were not ordinary characters. She knew that Juxon had of late taken a most serious view of the duties which were imposed on him as the rector of a parish, and that he had decided to guide and guard his flock with vigilance and courage as long as the spirit of persecution would suffer him to do so. While, therefore, many of the clergy were

for arming themselves, and for accompanying the King's forces in the field, he resisted that natural inclination, and that easy escape into the security of a camp, by preparing to abide the visitations of the storm at his appointed post. The path of duty, however dangerous and exposed, is always that of peace ; nevertheless, the age, the active habits, and the resolute spirit of Juxon made a vast and necessary difference between his course and that of the mild old parson of Cheddar. As Katharine revolved all these matters in her mind, she became reconciled to the thought of seeing her beloved Jane united at once to the man so well worthy of possessing her. The sole difficulty would be the reluctance of Juxon to expose a woman to those chances of distress and privation which alone he could cheerfully endure.

Katharine had long foreseen that the moment would arrive when Sir Oliver and herself must quit Milverton ; and until the late disclosure of Jane, she had fully reckoned upon that dear girl as the companion of their wanderings and the friend of her bosom ; but now it seemed a

duty to resign that comfort. However, there was one procedure by which it might be retained. If, when it became necessary for the royalist gentry to quit their homes, George Juxon would accompany the family to whatever city they might select as a temporary and secure residence, his marriage with Jane might soon take place, and there would be no interruption of her own sweet intercourse with her friend. Some thoughts like these had passed through the mind of Juxon as he paced up and down the terrace, full of that hope which is dashed with fear. While he was thus taking counsel of his own heart, Sir Charles Lambert arrived at Milverton, and, in company with Sir Oliver and Arthur, descended the steps and joined him. Sir Charles had for some time past appeared to so great advantage by the manner in which he had come forward in the royal cause, that he was considered, even by Juxon, a thoroughly changed man. There was a carefulness in his language, which greatly contrasted with his former coarseness. His manners were not only grave and composed, but there was an urbanity

in his address, which made a frank-hearted person like Juxon ashamed of not being able to like him. He thought him of a better capacity than he had once given him credit for, and was not willing to believe that, under all this outward improvement of his words and ways, his heart could remain unaffected. Moreover, there seemed no adequate reason for his assuming a false exterior, nor for any design which he might not openly avow. He attributed this amendment of character to secret compunction for his violence and brutality towards Cuthbert Noble; to that elevation of sentiment which a new position and great duties might and ought to produce; and to those considerations of death as an event possible and near, which the hazards of the approaching contest might naturally suggest to the least serious of men. "What think you, Master Juxon," said Sir Oliver, "our cousin Charles hath just had a letter from Yorkshire from Sir Thomas Leigh, who saith that we may soon expect his most gracious Majesty in these parts, and that he hopes to possess himself of Coventry and raise Warwickshire, and

make a good stand in this county, if Essex should march hither: in that case, you see, we shall not need to quit Milverton; and the battle may be fought so near home, that even Kate will see how fit it is that I should be in the field. Gout or no gout, I can get as far as Stoneleigh Abbey, and meet his Majesty."

"I am afraid the King reckons without his host," answered Juxon: "I doubt if the gates of Coventry will open more readily for him than those of Hull:—the citizens there are all for the parliament."

"The citizens of Coventry be hanged," said Sir Charles: "they have only their own train bands to man the walls, — a set of knock-knee'd rascals:—why, a squib in their breeches would clear their market-place."

"Yes," said Arthur; "and they would run like rats to their holes at the very clatter of a horse-hoof."

"Perhaps they might, Arthur," said Juxon smiling; "but the matter will be to get this horse into the streets, and this squib into the market-place."

Sir Charles, who well knew that Juxon was

no coward, bit his lips, and said, "Really I cannot think what is come to you, parson : you are always now a prophet of evil : — why the cause of the King would soon be down, if all had such faint hearts about it as you have."

"Faint hearts, sir, are fond of feeding on false hopes ; stout hearts look at naked dangers without blenching. The notion that a rebellion of citizens can be put down by a few horses is foolish. It prevents, first, earnest preparations to subdue it ; and, at last, when these are attempted, they prove too late, and altogether ineffectual."

"Well, Juxon, Sir Oliver here and I have done our parts, and shall do them to the last : your words don't touch me ; but I must say, you love to damp us ; I hope, however, that the boy cares as little for you as I do."

"You need not be rude as well as angry, Sir Charles."

"Rude ! methinks you forget yourself ! — a truce to all compliments. Did you not call me faint-hearted ?"

"Your memory is short indeed, Sir Charles, not to remember who first used the word."

"Come, come," interrupted the old knight; "I wo'n't have any falling out between friends. Are we not all king's men, loyal and true? It may be, Sir Charles, that Juxon sees further into matters than we do; but his heart is with us."

"That may seem clear to you, Sir Oliver:—time will show us all men in their true colours: I have been right once before, and I may be right again."

"What do you mean?" asked Juxon, reddening with anger: "do you doubt my loyalty, sir?"

The evil temper of Sir Charles was so strong within him, that, desirous only of vexing Juxon to the uttermost, he replied with a sneer, "You have taken care to secure yourself a friend in the enemy's camp; so that your parsonage at Old Beech will be quite safe, come what may; and you mean to stick by it, as I am told."

"It is an insinuation as false as it is base to suspect and utter it: try me not farther, or you will make me forget my sacred calling."

"You are not likely to do that by what I

hear of your doings at Old Beech. You preach like a Puritan already: it were a pity to lose a fat rectory if the Parliament get uppermost."

The mean and cruel turn, which Sir Charles thus gave to his malicious charge, so startled and affected Juxon, who had always been both honest and earnest in his pulpit, that he paused in his reply,—and was sending up a swift ejaculation to Heaven for the grace of patience, when Sir Oliver angrily interposed.

"Zounds and thunder, Sir Charles, you might have remembered, among the doings of Friend Juxon, that he has furnished right stout troopers from his own purse, and that every man in his parish, capable of bearing arms, who can be spared from home, has been sent off already to carry a pike for King Charles. I think the devil is in thee, or that yellow Margery hath crossed thy path this morning."

The mention of yellow Margery was never pleasant to Sir Charles, and a scowl came over his brow at the sound of her name; but he answered in a dogged and sullen manner,—
"Ay, that is all very well: it is good to have

two strings to one's bow. I suppose, Master Juxon will not deny that that canting fanatic, Cuthbert Noble, is his friend. My steward, who came last night from Hertfordshire, saw the vile hypocrite, with tuck and partizan, on guard in the market-place at St. Albans. Your grave tutor is a lieutenant of pikemen. I hope I shall ride over the rascal some fine day."

"A fanatic he may be—a hypocrite he cannot be; and you say truly that I am his friend; but I will not trust myself with another word—I must return home. Sir Charles, from henceforth I shall look on you as a stranger; and did it become my cloth I would chastise you."

"Insolent priest! thy cloth is thy protection," said Sir Charles, advancing with a lifted hunting whip, as if to strike Juxon.

"You need not come between us, Sir Oliver," said Juxon, with a look of quiet scorn: "in spite of the anger in his heart, he knows when to be prudent."

"Odd's life!" said the old knight, "I will have no more ill blood at Milverton:—look you,

go your ways, both of you, and sleep over it, and come here again to-morrow, and let us make all up. You are both right, and both wrong — faults on both sides ; that is always the story of a quarrel.”

With these words he took Juxon by the hand and shook it kindly, adding, “ There go, man, get your horse ; you’ll be yourself again before you reach home. Here, Arthur, boy, go with him, and call Richard to saddle his hobby.—I’ll make Sir Charles listen to reason.”

This easy and indolent mode of confounding right and wrong, and escaping out of the proper and severe course of honourable judgment, was by no means agreeable to the upright and manly Juxon. He coldly gave his hand, and wishing Sir Oliver a good morning, ascended the steps with Arthur, casting a look of silent and expressive indignation at Sir Charles, who regarded him in return with violent eyes and cheeks livid with rage.

As Juxon and Arthur passed round to the side of the mansion facing the court-yard, they saw Katharine Haywood and Jane Lambert

standing together under the shade of a tree, in earnest conversation. At the sound of the approaching footsteps they turned their heads; and it was evident to George Juxon that the subject of their discourse was connected with what had already passed at the interview between Katharine and himself that very morning.

“ Oh ! what a thing is man ! how far from power,
From settled peace and rest !
He is some twenty sev’ral men, at least,
Each sev’ral hour.”

The sweet and sudden calm which fell upon the roused and troubled passions of Juxon at the very sight of Jane Lambert brought that stanza of Herbert’s to his memory, and he gave utterance to it as he joined and stood with them for a few moments, while Arthur went forward to order out his horse.

If Katharine had not already told her friend that Juxon was now truly informed of all those circumstances which, at the time, must of necessity have perplexed him about her conduct and her probable engagement, the expression of his fine eyes would have revealed to her that

grateful fact. There is a silent eloquence in the look of one who truly and fondly loves which needs no interpreter. The avowal of his attachment, which he had upon principle resolved to suppress, his eyes, prompted by the pulses of his heart, spoke as plainly to Jane as though she had heard it from his lips in all the language of ardour and admiration.

Katharine questioned him reproachingly on the cause of his sudden return to Old Beech, but he excused himself without betraying the true reason. They gave credit to his simple assurance that it was not possible for him to prolong his visit at present; and with a tender pressure of the hand he took his leave of Jane, promising Katharine that he would soon ride over to Milverton again.

It was not till his horse had turned the distant corner of the road, and was lost to view, that Arthur came in from the outer gate; and the distress and dejection of the youth were so plainly to be read in his countenance, that Katharine took him aside to ask what was the matter. He related to her the quarrel between

Juxon and Sir Charles Lambert just as it had occurred. She heard it with more pain than surprise, for she was well aware of the unaltered nature of Sir Charles; and she knew that he cherished mean and vindictive feelings towards Juxon for his conduct at the time of his own ferocious assault on Cuthbert Noble, and for all his subsequent kindness and friendship to that injured student. On one account she very deeply regretted this occurrence. It could not fail to put a very serious obstacle in the way of that union between Jane Lambert and Juxon which she had just indulged herself with the hope she might soon have the happiness of seeing perfected at the altar.

The reflections of Juxon himself, as he rode homewards, were of a complexion as varied as the face of an April sky. His thoughts were overshadowed by many a cloud of fear, and care, and coming sorrow, while ever and anon they became glad and bright as if coloured with blue sky and sunbeams, and the rainbow of hope. Notwithstanding his uncomfortable quarrel with Sir Charles, it was a day to be marked in his

calendar with a white stone. The day was so hot, that he walked his horse leisurely all the way; and when he had gone about half the distance between Milverton and Old Beech, he pulled up near a water trough, under the shadow of a majestic old oak, and dismounted. There was a bank of earth round the trunk of the tree, on which he seated himself: his beast stood indolently still, after having dipped its nose in the trough; and both rider and horse luxuriated in the cool shade. The murmur of the spring that fed the trough was the only sound to be heard; and the loneliness of the spot, for it was in the middle of a common, suggested pleasing thoughts of gratitude for the human charity which had thus provided for the comfort and refreshment of man and his dumb companions in labour. By a natural train of associations the mind of Juxon was led to reflect on charity in its more high and heavenly signification, and on those works which it should produce. He considered what the earth would be if subjected to the law of love, and what it really was. He bethought him of the mission and office of the Prince of

Peace: he remembered that he was a minister of that new and glorious covenant announced by the voice of angels in a heavenly melody,—“Peace on earth, good will towards men.” He mused upon the titles by which ministers are designated, — watchmen, shepherds, — and he was more than ever confirmed in his resolution to remain with his flock at Old Beech during the coming troubles. “ ‘The hireling fleeth,’ ” said he to himself, “ ‘because he is an hireling.’ Why was I so moved at the taunt of malignity and ignorance? How strong a thing must be the fear of man, when I can allow myself to fear the opinion of one whom I despise, and whom, in truth, I ought to pity; when I can dare to wish for an opportunity of showing on the battle-field that my heart is English, loyal, and true. I am priest of the temple; I will defend my church porch to the last, and keep out the wolf as long as I can.” As Juxon was thus occupied in sober meditation, he heard the tramp of a horse galloping across the common, in the direction of Milverton. On looking up, he instantly knew the horse and the figure of Sir Charles

Lambert. He felt certain that nothing but a fit of boiling and ungovernable anger would have led to this swift pursuit of him, and was at no loss to conjecture the nature of the trial for which he must prepare. Juxon never rode from home in those unquiet days without pistols; but come what might from the violence of this infuriated man, he resolved that nothing should induce him to use them in his defence. Although as a clergyman he could not wear a sword, yet he often carried with him a cane of Italian invention, which contained a sword-blade, and by means of a secret spring threw out a small guard at the handle, which supplied a hilt, and thus, if at any time assaulted with the sword, he was furnished with some, though an imperfect, weapon of resistance. He was fortunately thus provided on the present occasion.

Sir Charles no sooner reached the spot than he threw himself impetuously from his horse, and said with a loud oath, "This shall settle our difference for ever." At the same time he drew his rapier, and advanced upon his antagonist.

Juxon, without a word, took a defensive posture, and opposing his cane-sword to that of Sir Charles, parried his fierce passes with such a quick eye and so strong a hand, that, in a rencontre which could not have lasted two minutes, he twisted the sword of his opponent from his angry grasp, and made it fly several yards off. He as immediately secured it. "By hell, you shall not escape me!" said Sir Charles, frantic with vexation; and plucking a pistol from his belt, he discharged it at Juxon as he returned from picking up the sword. The ball struck the buckle of Juxon's hat-band, and glanced off. He felt a slight shock, but, as it came aslant upon it, the concussion was not so violent as to stun him.

Sir Charles dropped the pistol, seized upon a second, which was in his belt, but, ere he could deliver his fire, Juxon had beaten aside his arm, and the bullet spent its force harmlessly on the yielding air.

"Madman!" said Juxon with an earnest and solemn tone, "let us from our hearts thank God. He has preserved you from the sin of

murder, and me from being hurried into the holy presence of the Prince of Peace from a scene of guilty contention, in the cause of which I am far from innocent. There is your sword : — there is my hand : — by these lips no human being shall ever be informed of what has just occurred. Your present situation and your present duties call upon you to use your sword in the field of honour and in the service of your king : do so in a good spirit, and forget this hour as fully as I forgive it.”

The burning coal fell, guided by Heaven, upon the humbled head of the proud one. Scalding tears stood in his eyes ; the blood rushed hotly to his cheeks. His embarrassment was so great, that for a while he could utter nothing. “ Let me hope,” said Juxon, “ that I have lost an enemy, and gained a friend.”

“ You have done more, much more,” answered Sir Charles : “ you are the first person on earth who ever touched my heart with a feeling altogether new : — I shall bless this day for ever. You shall never repent your noble

consideration for my character. This sword shall never again be dishonoured." Here Sir Charles fell upon his knees. "I ask pardon of God and of you, Juxon, for my murderous purpose. I feel that the hand of Providence has been in this strange work—I am not yet an utter reprobate."

"God forbid!" said Juxon, as he raised him up: "we will talk together of better hopes. Suppose we return together to Milverton, and show ourselves as reconciled heartily—it will, I think, spare that kind family many hours of uneasiness."

Sir Charles acceded with eagerness to the proposal, and mounting their horses they rode back quietly together.

CHAP. III.

And is there care in heaven? and is there love

In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?

There is; else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But O th' exceeding grace

Of highest God! that loves his creatures so,
And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe.

SPENSER.

THE village of Old Beech, which has been often named in this story as the living of George Juxon, was a retired and picturesque place, containing about three hundred inhabitants. Here, as at Cheddar, there was no lord of the manor in residence. The principal owner of the village lands for the last twenty years had been a Roman Catholic gentleman, who, being single, and of a severe and gloomy temper of mind, had, before this accession of property, em-

braced the monastic life in Italy, and taken the vows as a brother of the Carthusian order. The lessee of his estates had let them advantageously to four substantial farmers; one of whom occupied the venerable old manor-house. Its quaint wooden gables and ornamental carpentry always arrested the attention of the passer by their venerable appearance.

A bay window, with five lights in two divisions, marked very distinctly the situation of the great hall; a noble apartment used only by the tenant as a vast store-room for the produce of his orchard and his garden. The broad gates hung broken and decaying from the square stone columns in which their hinges had been fastened by iron staples, and the pavement of the court was half hid by rank weeds. The church was small and ancient, and stood, not far from the manor-house, on a gentle eminence, which commanded a beautiful flat of meadow-land, watered by a small clear river that meandered through the fields in fine and graceful curves, was richly fringed with willows, and turned in its course two clean-looking busy mills. Not

far from the churchyard stood a tall and stately beech-tree, about two centuries old, and near it the stump of the very tree from which the village had been first named was still visible.

The smooth bark of this noble old beech was covered with initial letters, true love knots, and joined hearts, rudely carved by rustic hands, many of which, it might be seen by the dates affixed, had long since mouldered under the grassy heaps, to which lowly beds of peace the very same bell still tolled the parting summons of their lineal descendants.

One of the most remarkable features in this pretty village was the rectory. The basement story was completely built of glazed bricks in checkered patterns, while that over it was constructed of fine massive black timbers, the walls being plastered between; the whole was surmounted with elevated overhanging roof and lofty gables. The entrance was through a fine long porch of timber, and the woodwork of this, as well as of the projecting portions of the roofs and gables, was elaborately ornamented after the fashion of the fifteenth century.

Of Juxon's habits something has already been said, but a more particular account of his home life is necessary to show him faithfully in the relation in which he stood to his parish. Having a private fortune, in addition to the proceeds of his living, he was as able as he proved himself always willing to benefit his people. When he came first among them he found them much neglected and in great darkness: his first step was to establish a school, and to win the hearts of the parents through their children, all of whom he had taught to read, and many of the most promising yet further instructed in writing and arithmetic. A few of the old villagers, and one of the most acute of his farmers, who, though unable to read himself, was well furnished with all that worldly wisdom which may be orally conveyed in pithy proverbs, and committed to memory for practical guidance in life, resisted this strange innovation. But steady perseverance and good-humoured resolution soon conquered all opposition; and Juxon had the satisfaction of seeing around him much improvement in that knowledge which makes the mind,

and *the heart* of man, accessible to the light of divine truth.

He was diligent in his duties, open in his manners, cheering in his words, and wise in his charities; he distinguished well between the objects of them, knew how to give, and when and what; he farmed his own glebe, partly as an amusement, and also to set a good example before his farmers of just behaviour to labourers. He understood cottage economy as well as the most prudent among them; could talk with them over the wickets of their little gardens about their succession crops, and about the fattening of their pigs and poultry, and knew every poor man's cow upon the village common.

The happy children upon the green never paused in their merry games when he passed them, and the winner of a race was doubly pleased if Master Juxon's eye had seen his triumph. The rough blacksmith, when, at breathing times, he stood out under the shade of the ancient and hollow oak near which his shed had been erected, always tried to engage him in a little talk; and although these brief colloquies

were commonly of simple occurrences, yet the sturdy smith forgot not the dropped word of advice, and he sung his part in the village quire o'Sundays with his understanding as well as with his fine deep voice. It might be truly said, that the parson of Old Beech was popular in his parish, and deserved to be so. A hogshead of wheat, and another of pease or barley, stood ever in his hall, out of which the aged widows and the poor housekeepers of the village were always liberally supplied in their need. He would patiently listen to their long and prosy tales about their family as they sat in his hospitable porch, without hurrying them, though perhaps they had told him the same story for weeks in succession. But if an angel from heaven dwelt among three hundred human beings, and passed his life in acts of love and kindness towards them, he should not want enemies, nor should he reap gratitude and good will from all; therefore Juxon was regarded by a small and envious knot with evil eyes. Of this party, a small chandler or grocer, a publican, and one of the millers, who was sinking into poverty

from slothful habits, were the leaders, and the worthy rector had sense enough to know that in due time they would show their enmity openly.

However, with the answer of a good conscience, he walked about daily, without the shadow of a fear, and lay down to sleep in peace, well knowing that God alone can make any of us to dwell in safety. Within the last two years many things had occurred to awaken his own mind to more serious views than those with which he had at first entered upon the ministerial office. The questions concerning scandals among the clergy engaged his serious attention; and his opinions about the lawfulness, or rather the expediency, of some practices, the good or evil of which he had never previously considered, now underwent a change.

He would never admit for a moment, that to hunt, or to shoot, or to fish, were diversions *inherently* sinful; but he began to look on time as a talent, for which every man must render a solemn account, and the time of a clergyman

as more especially given him to be employed to graver ends than could be honestly and effectually attained, if sports and amusements of a nature so idle and absorbing were not resigned. Nor was this the only change in his opinions ; — a closer study of the sacred volume, for the purpose of preaching its saving truths more plainly to his people ; an earnest desire to set before them the glory of gospel hopes, and the comfort of Scripture promises ; and a lively recollection of some of his conversations with Cuthbert Noble, satisfied him that if he would be found faithful he must preach, with authority and with persuasion, free reconciliation to God through a willing and all-sufficient Saviour.

The prayerful exercises to which the composition of his sermons now compelled him produced a blessed influence on his own spirit ; and he never stood up in his pulpit, as an ambassador for Christ, without a most affectionate solicitude for the welfare of immortal souls, and a present sense of the high privilege and deep responsibility of his sacred office. His growing seriousness, as

a clergyman, had been more apparent to Katharine Heywood than to any one else at Milverton; for she was too deeply taught to be deceived in the evidences of a living grace. In his parish his earnestness in his pulpit was well known, as might be seen from the report of it which had reached Sir Charles Lambert, and which partly caused those taunts and insinuations, the issue of which, in the quarrel and the encounter that followed, has been already related; but to common observers, as Juxon's language had no peculiar religious phraseology, and as his manners, his happy countenance, and his manly habits, prepossessed their good opinion, without alarming any of their prejudices, he seemed one of themselves, and they neither knew nor cared to know his inner man.

However, as Juxon and Sir Charles rode back slowly to Milverton after the violent scene which might have terminated so awfully for both, he was determined not to lose so favourable an occasion for setting before the softened transgressor the great and common evil of

man's nature, and the blessed remedy. He did this with a feeling, a faithfulness, and a humility which surprized and affected his silent companion greatly, and which at last drew from him a confession of a most interesting kind. He told Juxon that, from his earliest childhood, he had found himself an object of dislike and aversion to all his family; that his elder brother, his senior only by one year, had been the indulged and favoured pet both of his father and mother, while he had been always either treated with neglect or addressed in the language of unkindness and reproach; that hate had begotten hate, and that he had passed his early youth hating and hateful; that at the age of sixteen, as his brother was out shooting on the manor, he lost his life by the accidental discharge of his own gun, as he was carelessly forcing his way through some thick furze bushes. He confessed that he was inwardly rejoiced at this calamity; that he looked upon the corpse without one emotion of sorrow or even of pity, and that he viewed with a malignant satisfaction the agony of his parents, more especially that of

his mother, whose persecution of him had been perpetual, and of a petty and irritating nature. This feeling of his was so irrepressible as to be seen. The thought that their despised boy should inherit the estates and the title had proved so very intolerable to his mother that she could not endure his presence at home. He was therefore sent away, and placed under the charge of a severe tutor, who, finding him the ignorant and evil-disposed youth which the letters of his father had represented him, governed him with strictness, and instructed him with an evident contempt for his want of capacity and for his backwardness in those attainments which, in truth, it had been impossible for him to acquire; it having been the mean pleasure of his mother to deny him the advantages enjoyed by his brother. He related the story of his mother's funeral, to which he was called after an absence of two years, and the death of his father, which had taken place four years later, while he himself was abroad. It appeared by these accounts that subsequent to the death of his brother he

had never enjoyed or indeed desired any intercourse with his parents, and that when he came to take possession of the estates, he found his sisters, who were much younger than himself, grown up and left to his protection. As they were not mixed up in his mind with the injuries of his childhood, such little kindness as he had ever felt capable of he had entertained for them. But even here he stated he had found disappointment; for one being timid and of no character, feared him, while his sister Jane, the only being who had ever behaved well to him, he nevertheless knew did not, and perhaps could not, love him as a brother.

This confession was poured into the ear of a generous and a thoughtful Christian, deeply skilled in the diseases of the human heart. It was evident to Juxon that the depravity of our fallen nature, common to all, had, in the miserable heart now laid bare before him, been inflamed by the early unkindness of parents, and had taken the dark colours of a rancorous and cruel disposition. Yet, even in this apparently desperate case, there was a ray of hope, there

was a light of that mysterious something which may be observed in the human heart, as a fragment of its better nature that has survived the fall,—*a capacity of loving*; which, as it could find no issue towards man, exhibited itself in a rare kindness and affection to dogs, horses, and birds. To these living creatures Sir Charles, who was to man indifferent or cruel, showed himself gentle, patient, and fond. Juxon had often observed this with pleasure: he now caught this golden string, and by it he led up the mind of his hearer to contemplate the God of creation upon a throne of universal love, caring for the meanest of his creatures, and revealing himself more especially to man in the relation of Father. Thence, by a swift transition, he painted man (*the whole race*) prodigal, miserable, naked, feeding with swine, till returning to their Father they were forgiven and with embraces; nor, while he fixed attention upon the mighty Saviour, from whose gracious lips this parable proceeded, did he fail to preach Jesus as the incarnation of Divine love, reconciling the lost children of earth to their heavenly Father, waiting to be gracious.

He did not thus speak in vain :— who shall dare to look down upon any human being as lost, hardened, reprobate ? Who maketh men to differ ? Who can make the rock yield water, and dry up the Euphrates ? He who can change flesh into stone when it is his pleasure.

But we return to show the connection of what has passed with the progress of our story.

It was a most welcome sight to the family at Milverton, to see Juxon and Sir Charles return amicably together after the quarrel of the morning ; but there was something, nevertheless, very inexplicable in the manners of both. Those of the former were far more serious and absorbed than Katharine had ever observed them before ; while the latter had an embarrassed air, a softened tone of voice, and an expression of deep, real, unaffected sorrow in his countenance.

Whatever had passed between them, it was evident that the reconciliation was on both sides of the sincere nature of hearty forgiveness. As Katharine contemplated the brow and the features of Sir Charles, she discerned traces of

a mental working such as she had never seen at any previous period of their frequent intercourse; and, for the first time, she looked on him without aversion and without suspicion.

To his great honour, and as the strongest proof of the good effect wrought on him by the events of that memorable day, he took the first opportunity that offered, to declare, in the absence of Juxon, the circumstances of their rencontre, and the generous conduct of his noble antagonist.

There is a something in the honest avowal of shame, and the honest recognition of another's excellence, which, as it can only proceed from a humbled and subdued heart, so it will instantly engage the approval of every well constituted mind.

From that very hour Sir Charles found himself regarded by all at Milverton with a new feeling,—all countenances were changed towards him: he had gotten a friend in Katharine,—he found the eyes of his sister Jane ever resting upon him, with a new and strange delight: Sir Oliver, to whom discord was trou-

ble, and who had never wholly resigned the hope of having Sir Charles for a son-in-law, was beyond measure gratified; and Arthur felt a more undoubting confidence and ease at the thought of serving under him than he had hitherto admitted.

A sense of all these mercies, a consciousness that he was drawn with the cords of love by an invisible hand, deepened his repentance and humility, and gave life, strength, and love to his new-born faith; but all this was a secret work, in which he was wisely assisted by the prudent counsel and the sound judgment of Juxon. It was fortunate, that, amid the stirring and necessary duties of those times, he was provided with so plain, so manly, so healthy an adviser. Side by side, with a profound self-abasement, grew a sentiment of self-respect, that prevented his spirit being paralysed, or cast down below the right degree of energy required of him by his position at the moment. He was now truly prepared, in a more noble frame of mind, to render good and faithful service wherever the cause of his king and country

might lead him. Now, too, he understood and respected the motives which decided Juxon to remain at his own proper post, and to perform his own sacred duties to the last moment.

In the fortnight which passed about this period he lived long; that is, he gathered the experience which is usually the fruit of a much longer space of time.

Swiftly as the days glided by, they fully developed the love of Juxon and Jane Lambert; and, although Katharine could not persuade Juxon to hear of Jane's being exposed to the inconvenience and danger of becoming his wife, at a time when the clergy might expect a persecution, yet she did enjoy the happiness of seeing them seated before her in the sweet and interesting relation of avowed and betrothed lovers.

CHAP. IV.

Food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better: tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.

King Henry IV.

ALTHOUGH Cuthbert Noble was by degrees gaining a little experience in his new and unsuitable calling, yet it must be confessed that a little of his enthusiasm evaporated under the necessary process of being drilled and taught his exercise; and not only so, but he began to be very much puzzled and perplexed at the opinions and the conduct of many with whom he was now to live and to act. The Colonel of the regiment in which he had received his appointment was, indeed, a man eminently worthy of respect and esteem. He was a devout, reserved person, of a noble and grave presence,—an approved soldier, and a sincere and sound patriot. He considered himself to be opposing the crown

upon strict constitutional principles ; and, being conscientiously attached to the Presbyterian form of church government, desired the overthrow of the prelacy, and the total abolition of episcopacy. Nevertheless, he viewed with distaste and a cold sufferance the extravagant proceedings of the various independent sects now loose upon society ; and discouraged, as far as he could, without danger to the one great and common cause, the practices which already obtained in the ranks of the Parliament levies. Every vain and intoxicated fanatic, who had the power of uttering a few dozen unconnected and rambling sentences without book, claimed for his shallow babbling the authority of inspiration, and asserted his gift of speech as a divine commission, by which he was called to the office of a preacher of the word of God. His own religion was serious, practical, intelligible ; and he had a sternness of sound judgment, before which all flighty pretensions and false confidences fell down or fled away. His name was Maxwell : he had been a friend of the father of Francis Heywood, and was very

well acquainted with Francis. Owing to this circumstance Cuthbert was favourably introduced to him, and was always very considerably treated; but their characters, their ages, and their relative situations in the regiment, made it impossible for them to become intimate with each other. Moreover, the earliest and latest waking thoughts of Colonel Maxwell were wholly taken up with the very important duties of preparing his corps by strict discipline and close training for the day of trial, which could not be very far distant; therefore Cuthbert was left, soon after he joined, to make out as well as he could with the society of the captain of his company and his brother lieutenant. At first, indeed, for a very few days, he had enjoyed the comfort of having Francis Heywood in the same quarters, but the horse had marched down to Northampton, and they were thus separated. Now the captain of Cuthbert's company had been a master butcher, of the name of Ruddiman, about forty years of age: a fine portly man, standing about six feet three inches in height, with ample chest and broad shoulders, little eyes, red

cheeks, a low forehead, and coarse greasy black hair. He had a fist that would fell a bullock, and a voice that would frighten a herd of them. In spite of the very hardening influence of his calling, he had nothing unkind in his temper. He had thrived greatly in his business, was honest and just in all his dealings, a good husband, a good father, and a good citizen, — with a house full of children, and a pretty pasture farm in the county of Hertfordshire. He was as bold as he was strong; but was here, nevertheless, solely in obedience to the wishes of an active, ambitious, meddling wife, who was a bitter, censorious, religious politician, and whose pride it was that her husband should be a downking man, and a captain in the Parliament army. The good captain himself, meanwhile, barring his wife's sovereign will, and the honour of the title, would much rather have looked after his business at home; or, at all events, have been permitted to join a horse regiment, though only as a sergeant. But Mrs. Ruddiman had decided otherwise, and had told him that, if he only served for a few weeks or months as a captain,

and looked well about him, he might get made a commissary and get a contract, and make his fortune. This last consideration was not without its weight; for Master Ruddiman had always a keen eye to the main chance. The brother lieutenant of Cuthbert was a very different sort of personage. He was a thin man, of middle stature, with a pale face and red hair, under thirty years of age. His trade had been that of a dyer: he had rendered conspicuous service at the last election, in securing the return of a Puritan to Parliament, and had been rewarded thus: he was needy, and the pay of his humble rank an object to him. He had great fluency of words, and was a raving Independent of the most virulent order. His name was Elkanah Sippet: he was ignorant, irritable, and vain. He knew a little Latin, with which he was wont to garnish his talk when he wanted to pass off for a scholar, and puzzle big Captain Ruddiman; and he could fill his mouth with Scripture phrases and texts when he wished to impress Cuthbert with a favourable notion of his piety. Ruddiman and Sippet hated each other with about as na-

tural and as cordial a hatred as might consist with their being on the same side in this contest. Neither of them could understand or like poor Cuthbert ; but both took refuge from the uneasy contempt with which they regarded each other, by endeavouring to conciliate his good opinion, or rather his preference.

To choose between them was easy : Ruddiman was worth a dozen Sippets in the qualities of his nature ; nor was there any thing of the hypocrite in him. He was dull, and slow of comprehension ; therefore he seldom suffered himself to speak about religion, but passively knelt and passively listened to the long prayers and longer preachings of the chaplain. He had been so stupified and subdued at home about points of faith and church government by his wife's brother, a warm and wordy brazier, the godly elder of the congregation to which his wife belonged, that he yielded, partly for the sake of peace, and partly in distrust of his own reason. Thus, in plain fact, he feared God truly for himself, and received the interpretations of Scripture delivered by the clergy,

and the lay elders of his sect, with a submission as implicit, and an apprehension as confused, as the Italian peasant listens to the Latin oration of a Franciscan friar. His politics were more simple; and he was in the habit of expressing what he felt about them by always calling the King *the man Charles Stuart*, and all the principal leaders of the Parliament party right honest and God-fearing worthies. "A man's a man," he would say: "I don't see why any one should be called lord over another; and as for bishops, bless us, why should they live in palaces, and hold forth about taxes in the House of Lords?—Don't you think that's wrong, Master Noble, quite wrong? Why it is writ in the Bible that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world." To this political creed Cuthbert would give assent; but a quick memory whispered to his inner man, "Why then do my servants fight?" As for his brother lieutenant, his tone was always rancorous and unchristian: he was of a mean and narrow mind, without charity and without patience; selfish and tricky, and, withal, quite intent

on rising upon the ruin of his betters. He felt a sort of inferiority in the presence of Cuthbert that a little awed him; but his nature would break out occasionally. It was no small advantage to Cuthbert that his two companions had seen him, for a few days, often walking and conversing with Francis Haywood, whose soldierly appearance had attracted general attention among the troops. Moreover, though far indeed from the aptitude desired by Colonel Maxwell, the intelligence of Cuthbert in the field of exercise was greater than that of either Ruddiman or Sippet. Perhaps, after all, the greatest trial of Cuthbert arose from the manners of those with whom he was now compelled, by the distribution of quarters, to live night and day. As officers of the same company, Captain Ruddiman, Sippet, and himself, took their meals together, and he was compelled to occupy a stretcher in the same sleeping chamber with Sippet. Now Ruddiman was a very gross and unclean feeder, and had a most disgusting habit of hawking and spitting on the floor all day long; while Sippet, who secretly indulged in the too

frequent use of strong waters, always stunk of spirits, and snored through his nights so loudly, as very seriously to disturb the rest of Cuthbert: nor was it possible, with so irritating an accompaniment, to comfort his wakeful hours with those meditations with which he had often solaced his night watches at Milverton while confined by his wound. However, his spirit, though fretted, did not sink under these annoyances: he rose constantly with the first glimmer of dawn: he did his utmost to perfect himself in all matters of drill and discipline. He gave his best attention to all his instructors, and he performed all his duties with manly cheerfulness, and in the best possible spirit. Colonel Maxwell saw this with silent satisfaction; but he was not a man for lavish praises and sudden intimacies, nor was he without a clear perception that Cuthbert would never make a thorough soldier; indeed his immovable gravity was sometimes very near being altogether conquered by a burst of laughter at the mode in which Cuthbert exhibited the solemn earnestness of

his desire to learn his exercises thoroughly, and to command his men properly.

One day, for instance, very soon after Cuthbert's arrival, as he rode through the different squads of recruits who were learning their facings, he found Cuthbert in one corner of the field, with his head in the air, and a corporal giving him private instructions; and, unperceived by the former, he heard the following strange query:—"Now, my brave man, pray have the goodness to explain to me, very exactly, how it is, that is, upon what principle it is, that, if I place my feet in this extraordinary manner, I shall come to what you call 'the right about face?'"

"Principle! God save you, master! I know nothing at all about principles; but I know, if you do as I bid you, and put the ball of your right toe to your left heel, and raise the fore part of your feet, and come smartly, heel round, on your two heels, and bring back your right sharply and square with the left, you will come to the right about like a man and a musketeer."

Again, at an after period, as the Colonel passed

the spot where a company of pikemen was parading under the orders of Cuthbert, the warlike student, who was just fresh from the perusal of a military treatise in Greek, having taken post at a farther distance than usual in the front, and noticing a little whispering and unsteadiness, called out with most innocent seriousness,—“ Silence, men, silence : the Lacedæmonians never spoke in the ranks.”

The pikemen seeing the Colonel near became silent, rather in respect to his presence than obedience to their simple-hearted lieutenant, and wondered the while what county militia these Lacedæmonians might be. The commanding officer, averting his head to conceal his irrepressible smiles, went forward ; and Cuthbert, quite unconscious of any thing strange or ridiculous, proceeded to number off, and prove his pikemen according to the intricate system of the slow and cumbrous movements of those days.

Never, however, was a human being more thoroughly out of his element than Master Cuthbert as lieutenant in this said company of

pikemen under the orders of Captain Ruddiman. He could contrive, indeed, a little leisure and a little solitude most days; but even those brief seasons of meditation and enjoyment were often broken in upon by a sergeant hurrying after him to say that perhaps eleven set of new straps for back and breast pieces were wanting, or that two pikes were broken, and three men had lost the scabbards of their tucks.

Moreover, he could hardly find a private path or walk near St. Albans, where he did not come suddenly upon a few military sinners, who had stolen out of the sight of their preaching officers and praying comrades to have a game of trap-ball, tip-cat, or the greater abominations of cross and pile, pitch and hustle, and chuck farthing. Nay, upon one occasion, he surprised a little party under a buttress of the abbey playing at primero, trump, put, or beat the knave out of doors, with two dollys sitting in their company, of whom it might be plainly seen that they had no business in a garrison of Puritans. But he was in these moments usually in too absorbed a mood to take notice of and reprove these trans-

gressors, and was quite as anxious to turn away his eyes as the soldiers were to see them so averted.

One day, as he wandered into the abbey a little before sunset, and was standing lost in thought before the monument of Lord Bacon, and contemplating the fine alabaster effigy of that great philosopher, he heard himself gently addressed by name, and turning to the speaker, he recognised, with as much surprise as delight, his worthy and invaluable friend Randal, the surgeon of Warwick, to whose skilful care and kind treatment he held himself indebted, under God, for his life.

Their pleasure at meeting was mutual, and was increased when they found that they were again providentially brought together, and held commissions in the same corps. Randal had offered his services to the Parliament, and had been appointed the surgeon of this levy. Henceforth Cuthbert would enjoy the comfort of his society and the advantage of his counsel. They agreed instantly to live and mess together; and, after a long and interesting conversation about

Milverton, the Heywoods, and his friend Juxon, they walked together to the Colonel's quarter, where Randal had been invited to sup; and Cuthbert returned, in high spirits, and with a heart full of joy and thanksgiving, to take his own meal with Ruddiman and Sippet, and to make known to them his intention of leaving their mess, and living in future with his old friend Randal. Ruddiman was sincerely vexed, ate less, and hawked rather more than usual, and proposed as an arrangement, not unnatural, that the surgeon should join their party instead of this breaking up; and Lieutenant Sippet, who wished much to avoid being left alone with Ruddiman, very earnestly seconded this proposal; observing, that he thought it a very proper subject for most serious consideration, and that they ought to seek the Lord for guidance, that they might plainly discern his will in this important matter.

This, Cuthbert said, he deemed to be an occasion on which so solemn a proceeding was altogether uncalled for and improper. Sippet misquoted and misapplied a shower of texts,

which, in a sadder mood, would have made poor Cuthbert's head ache. Ruddiman did not see what they were to pray about, for his part, and thought a man might do his duty to God and his neighbour very well without so much prayer. "But if you must pray," said he, "Friend Sippet, pray to be kept from putting your mouth so often to that stone bottle of strong waters at the corner of your bed, and from snoring so loud every night, man. Why, though I am next room, you waked me this morning before cock-crow; and I doubt if Master Noble has had a sound night's sleep since he joined us." Cuthbert hastily wished them good night, and withdrew; so in what manner the wrathful Sippet resented this affront, or whether he did so at all, he never heard.

CHAP. V.

Pray now buy some : I love a ballad in print, a' life ; for then we are sure they are true.

Winter's Tale.

ALTHOUGH the good parson of Cheddar was as yet unmolested, and continued his ministrations in peace, he was far too sagacious not to perceive the growing strength of Parliament, and never partook of those extravagant hopes, which, upon the arrival of the Marquis of Hertford, at the city of Wells, animated so many of the gentlemen and the clergy in Somersetshire. But he gave such attendance at the meetings of a public nature as was necessary to show plainly the part which he had taken, — and he set a faithful example of loyalty in his parish. The son and the son-in-law of old Blount the franklin, and most of the yeomen of Cheddar, offered their services to the Marquis, and re-

paired to his quarters well mounted and armed. — It was a deeply mortifying reflection to Noble and his wife that their son Cuthbert had joined the forces of the Parliament, and was already in arms against his king. Their spirits were far more depressed by this consideration than by any other. Compared to this heavy trial all others, which could possibly arrive, seemed light and undeserving of careful or anxious deprecation; but for this one chastisement, they humbled themselves before God daily with tears and supplications. Nevertheless they sorrowed not as without hope, and they did not murmur. They knew that their prayers were poured out before a Father of mercies, who heareth always, and gives or withholds the blessing implored, with a wisdom that cannot err, and with a mysterious love.

Therefore they were enabled to preserve a calm and resigned aspect before the village, and before their household, though plain Peter and the good maidens were not to be deceived as to their silent sufferings; for master did not notice the flowers and birds in the garden so

much now, and walked up and down thinking, instead of talking pleasant; and mistress had not looked after her fruit-preserves and her home-made wines this year with the heart she used to do; and, worst sign of all, the dinner was often carried away hardly touched by either. The apprehensions of Noble as to the progress of disaffection to the royal cause proved but too well founded. The private agents and emissaries of the Parliament party wrought underhand to persuade the people, that, by the commission of array, a great part of the estates of all substantial yeomen and freeholders would be taken from them, alleging, that some lords had said that "twenty pounds by the year was enough for every peasant to live on;" and they further said, that all the meaner and poorer sort of people were appointed by the same commission to pay a tax of one day's labour in every week to the King. These reports, however little deserving of credit, were received by the more ignorant with implicit belief, and circulated by the interested and designing with most persevering activity. The people were thus taught

that, if they did not adhere to the Parliament, and submit to the ordinance for the militia, they would soon be no better than slaves to the lords, and the victims of a most cruel oppression.

The ignorance and credulity of the vulgar were by these arts widely and successfully imposed upon; but the population of Cheddar was preserved from these corrupting falsehoods by the prudence of Noble. He early obtained a copy of the commission of array, which was written in Latin, and having translated it with fidelity, distributed copies from house to house. The word of the good parson was ever held in reverence by his flock, therefore, with few exceptions, and those confined to the worst characters in the village, his account of the matter was received as true; while in many other places the crafty supporters of the levelling party, taking advantage of the commissions being in Latin, translated it into what English they pleased, and abused simple folk in the manner related.

While the Marquis of Hertford maintained himself at Wells all things continued quiet at

Cheddar; but as Noble had foreseen, there was soon a very powerful party brought against him, and he was compelled to retire, before the increasing forces and the active officers of the Parliament, to Sherborne, in Dorsetshire.

Master Daws, the artful and the covetous enemy of Noble, who had been already baffled in his endeavour to drag him before a committee, and whose eyes were steadily fixed upon the living of Cheddar, had not been inactive while the Royalists lay at Wells.

He had, it is true, seldom ventured from home for fear his precious carcass might receive some weighty mark of the wrath or merriment of a royal trooper, though he might have gone to and fro in his clerical garb as safe as an innocent child: but conscience made a coward of him; for he had employed the period of his confinement to his house in preparing certain lying and inflammatory papers, which, through the agency of a near relation, who was a scrivener's clerk at Bristol, he procured to be secretly printed in that city. These papers were of the most indecent and outrageous nature,

directed chiefly against prelacy, and all supporters of the church of England and the episcopal form of government. Now, this scrivener's clerk, though he knew and despised the hypocrisy of Master Daws, and laughed at all religion, whether real or pretended, lent himself as a most ready agent in this charitable work. "There are diversities of gifts, my dear Matty," said his crafty uncle Daws in the letter which accompanied his manuscript libels,—“diversities of gifts, but the same spirit:—thou hast a lively wit, and a playful hand with thy pencil; prithee put a little device of some facetious kind at the head of each of these papers,—such an one as may be easily struck off in a wood-cut of the kind, which the profane Italians call caricature: but what need I say more? Thou knowest what I would have:—see thou do it. I wish to have them done before Cheddar fair, which is held, thou knowest, at the latter end of September. They are a bigoted, base, priest-ridden herd of swine in that parish, and as blind as the moles and the bats:—we must let in a little light on them:—see thou do it broadly.”

The sharp-visaged, pale-faced nephew grinned as he read his worthy uncle's epistle, and secretly resolved at once to gratify the mean desire expressed in it, and to amuse himself, at his uncle's expense, when it was too late for him to make any alteration should he detect it. Of the ungainly figure, and the hideous features of his uncle, he had caricatures without number; and as they were so strongly marked, that the rudest engraver of a wooden block could not fail to copy them faithfully, he determined that the long visage of Daws himself should find a place in his performance.

The fair-day of Cheddar was that one day in the year which was always most trying to Noble. All the other holydays were home festivals, and were kept by the villagers among themselves, being seldom intruded on by strangers; but the annual fair always brought with it a herd of idle vagabonds from Bristol, and other towns within a convenient distance, and seldom terminated without many profligate, disgusting scenes, or an open brawl. The state of public affairs, and the presence of a Puritan

force in Somersetshire, had such an effect on the fairs throughout the county this autumn, that they were in general but thinly attended, and little or no business was done among the farmers and dealers, by whom they were commonly frequented.

Nevertheless, fairs were too important in the social economy to the convenience of the people to be wholly suspended. Therefore, on the appointed morning, early in September, a pleasant peal of five bells (not as yet silenced by force or law) gave due notice from the tower of Cheddar church that the day of fairings and gilt gingerbread had arrived; but although a certain quantity of booths had been erected, only one, and that but scantily supplied, was set apart for the profane display of those glittering temptations. Among the farm servants standing for hire, there were no stout young carters with their whips, no hale shepherds with their crooks and green sprigs in their hats; and though there was no lack of maids, yet, as they crowded together, they looked lonesome and sad, and their bonny brown hair was not tied

up with ribands. The few children present were held fast by the hand, and led by their parents to see the common purchases made for the household; but even in these matters the traffic was dull. There were, indeed, a few cattle; a few pens of sheep; some piles of Cheddar and other Somersetshire cheese; a store of salted meats; one stall with fair garnishes of pewter for the cupboard; another with wooden bowls, and trenchers, and vessels for the dairy; and one great one, at which groceries, cloths, linens, and articles of hardware, were promiscuously set forth, and where the neighbouring housewives were wont to lay in their store of useful necessities for the coming year. But now it was so uncertain what a day might bring forth, that not many cared to make their annual outlay.

It might be supposed, that, in such unsettled times, mountebanks, tumblers, and conjurers could hardly reckon on a sufficient harvest of pence to find them in beer and shoe leather; but some of them still ventured their exhibitions, and with a ready wit practised boldly,

wherever they came, upon the popular prejudices of the hour, and lent themselves to the crafty suggestions of the designing, who well knew that the vulgar mind may be artfully seduced to join in the ridicule of those very persons and things, which, in its better moments, it has respected.

Now the nephew of Daws had been a most willing and active agent in forwarding the objects of his uncle; for he had not only procured his libellous papers to be printed, but he had provided them each with a caricature engraving on wood; and he had, in like manner, caused certain ribald songs to be headed for distribution at Cheddar fair; so that they who could not read the slanders and calumnies contained in the printed matter might see them pictured to their senses. Nor did he stop here; but he procured a base fellow, the son of a drunken sadler, who was a noted posture master in Bristol, to carry these papers and prints to Cheddar on the fair day, and to commend them to the people. This knave, taking with him a merriman and a fire-eater to assist him

in attracting a crowd, repaired thither, and about noon began his operations on a scaffold near the market cross. They had been followed by a rabble of disorderly persons, among whom the report of some fun at Cheddar fair had been already spread by the rogues engaged on the occasion.

Master Daws, who had been advised by his nephew of the preparations that were made for bringing the church and its ministers into contempt before the population of Cheddar, walked to the village at an early hour in company with his nephew, under the pretence of buying a hundred weight of cheese and a salted mutton; and, though the day was fine, he took care to appear in the blue Geneva cloak, which was commonly worn by the Puritan divines. Having engaged an upper room in a public house facing the market place, he had no sooner stalked through the vacant crowd, and made his purchases, than he retired to feast his malignant envy from the window of this chamber.

The sound of the pipe and tabor, and the nasal tones of Master Merriman, soon gathered

all the idle folk in the fair round the mountebank's scaffold. The fool began with their favourite egg-dance; and they stood with gaping mouths to see him hop about on one leg, and then, being blindfolded, dance backwards and forwards between the eggs without touching one of them: their mouths gaped yet wider, as this performer was succeeded by the fire-eater, who, after commencing by the trick of drawing forth from his mouth yard after yard of ribands, as if his stomach had been a riband loom, put a bundle of lighted matches into his mouth, and blew the smoke of the sulphur through his nostrils. Last came the posture-master, whose art consisted in making all sorts of uncouth faces, and exhibiting in a natural but shocking manner every species of deformity and dislocation. Now he showed a huge rising of his left shoulder; now shifted the deformity into the other; now represented a humpback; accompanying these changes of his figure with sundry comical contortions of countenance, to which the crowd responded in roars of laughter. Having thus got them into good humour for

his purpose, he went on to imitate the cries and voices of sundry animals and birds ; the crow of the cock, the gabble of the geese, the gobble of the turkey, the quaak of the duck, the squeak of the sucking pig, the bleat of the lamb, the grunt of the old sow, and the braying of the ass. The crowd was on the broad grin while he went through these imitations. He now therefore disappeared for a minute, leaving the merriman to amuse them, by way of interlude, with a jocular dance, and returned in robes made of coarse materials to imitate those of a bishop. His figure was stuffed out to Falstaff-like proportions ; his hands were crossed with due gravity ; he had plumpers in his cheeks ; and he forthwith began to intone an anthem with burlesque solemnity. The words were in mockery of the coronation anthem ; and the petition for the growth of the King's beard, and the shaving thereof, was delivered in all those varieties of note which he had before given when mimicking the animals of the farm-yard. He thus excited the mirth of the rabble vastly. He closed this mischievous performance by a

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comic song about tithes ; and, after imitating the squeak of a sucking pig, and the clack of a hen, he produced upon the stage, by sleight of hand, as if from his paunch, a basket filled with curious samples of the small tithe, in which the tenth egg was not forgotten. His place was now taken by the mountebank, who professed to be appointed grand physician to the state, and purifier of the church. The fool stood by his side making all the uncouth faces which he could think of, taken, it must be confessed, most chiefly from the sour *kill-joys* of the time; and holding a large bundle of printed papers, each headed by a wood-cut, he distributed them down among the people for due consideration of pence and farthings dropped into his cap. These papers, though ridiculous devices were prefixed to them, contained a venom of no laughable matter, and were eagerly bought up.

The nephew of old Daws had been at little pains to rack his invention for the subject of these curious cuts. On one, he had engraven the figure of a fox, vested in canonicals, with a crosier in his hand and a mitre on his head,

hanging upon a tree, with a flock of geese and other fowl beneath chattering at him; on another, he had represented a fox in chains, with his right paw on a bag of money, and a monkey at prayers by his side, trying to steal it away. On the next was given the figure of a wolf in sheep's clothing, bearing a close resemblance to his own uncle, puffing a large fire with a pair of bellows, on which was inscribed "Groans and sighs;" while above was depicted an owl, with a wolf and a lamb joining in prayers. By a self-deception not uncommon, Master Daws had not the slightest suspicion that the said wolf bore any likeness to himself, and, to the secret diversion of his nephew, he gave a most ghastly smile of approval as he looked over the rude caricatures, three of which we have described. The time was now come for directing the wayward crowd to a stronger expression of their contempt for the church than laughter. Accordingly, the nephew of Daws descended among them, and proposed that they should burn a bishop's effigy before the parson's house. While the effigy was preparing, the people stood

in groups reading the papers; and sundry charitable suggestions were made by the baser among them. "Let's get into his cellar," said one, "and drink a little of the sacrament wine." — "Let's lay hold of the church plate," said another: — "Or give the parson a ride on old Bruin here," was the cruel proposal of a third, pointing to a huge bear in a string, led by a wandering showman. All things were soon ready; and, led by the posture master in front, and guided behind by the mischievous nephew of Master Daws, off the rabble moved, noisy and half drunk, and ready for all evil. They had no sooner reached the yew-tree in the churchyard, and were advancing towards the wicket, than out rushed an old beggar, stumping on his wooden leg, followed by plain Peter and two more old labourers, and immediately behind them, as if in pursuit, a fine young bull. The old beggar, who was no other than the worn-out veteran before mentioned, shouted, "*Mad bull!*" at the top of his voice, with an earnestness and passion that made him at once believed; and the crowd fled, tumbling over each other, as

they ran, in inextricable confusion : nor were they allowed time to detect the deception practised on them ; for the old soldier and plain Peter slipping behind the frightened beast, and goading him forward, he performed his friendly office as well as the maddest of all bulls, and very effectually dispersed the mob, and defeated their base and cruel intentions for that day. Master Daws, who had from his post of observation at the window witnessed the scenes in the market-place with the most malignant satisfaction, as soon as the crowd marched off towards the vicarage with the effigy, and he saw the coast clear, could not repress his curiosity, and, stealing down, followed afar off to watch their operations. In the luckless moment of their panic and flight, he was so terrified and puzzled, that he could not regain the house, but ran with the crowd, and was thrown down by a pig ; nor was this the worst, for it so happened that a man, leading a monkey, fell at the same moment, and jocko flew upon Daws and bit his right ear, till he screamed for agony : beyond this, however, and the tearing of his

clothes, he sustained no injury. A worse fate waited the posture-master, the bear being infuriated at the hubbub, and having broken away from his master, seized him fiercely, and embraced him in a hug so fatal, that it produced contortions of countenance and a dislocation of bones very different from those he had so lately been exhibiting, and left him a cripple for life. The warning of his master's danger had been communicated to plain Peter, that very morning, by the grateful old soldier, who had come to that fair with no other intention than rendering this service, he having heard a whisper of the intended doings in a tap at Bristol. It so chanced that old Noble was confined to the house by a sprain of the ankle, and his mistress was not well ; so Peter kept from them all mention of these fears. The stratagem he adopted for putting the mob to flight was suggested by the old soldier, and cheerfully aided by a neighbouring farmer and two of his servants. Thus was the worthy parson protected in peace, and kept safe from the strife of tongues and the violence of a base rabble, throughout a day that

was very threatening: unconscious himself how Daws had been undermining him, he had passed it in a frame of mind more than usually composed.

Daws and his nephew continued their retreat without staying to pay their reckoning at the public-house. The greater part of the crowd, finding themselves on the road to Axbridge, proceeded there, to make up for their disappointment at Cheddar by a riot at that place instead. So few, indeed, returned, after they had got beyond the reach of danger, to find out the truth of it, and they squabbled so much among themselves, that Master Blount and the villagers were able to prevent further disturbance at that time. Before evening all the strange rabble departed; and the sun set on Cheddar as tranquilly as in happier times.

CHAP. VI.

It's a hard fate to be slain for what a man should never willingly fight.

RALEGH.

THE prediction of Juxon concerning the city of Coventry proved correct: — not only was the disposition of the inhabitants such as he described, but the Parliamentarians, whose vigilance and activity were very great, sent forward a small force to assist the citizens in defending the place, — and the King had the mortification of summoning it in vain. The gates were shut against him, and the burghers sent out a message of defiance. His Majesty came to Stoneleigh Abbey the same afternoon, much dejected; and being there joined by several of the most considerable gentlemen in the county, he decided on raising his standard at Nottingham, which was accordingly done on the 25th of

August ; but he found that place much emptier than he expected, and learned that the army of the Parliament, composed of horse, foot, and cannon, was at Northampton. His own few cannon and stores were, as yet, at quarters in York ; and the levy gathered immediately under his own person was at this moment very inconsiderable. Among the cavaliers, who had brought their contingent of horsemen for the royal service, was Sir Charles Lambert, with young Arthur Heywood and a small troop of stout yeomanry. The age of boyhood is so impressible, that the mind readily admits an omen for good or for evil ; and Arthur felt, and was angry with himself for feeling, uncomfortable, because the very first evening of its erection the royal standard was blown down by a violent storm of wind and rain.

A short time was now consumed in messages between the King and the two Houses ; but on neither side were the negotiations conducted in a spirit which could issue otherwise than they did. The declaration of the two Houses to the kingdom was a trumpet note that gave

no uncertain sound, and it was answered to by the King with a princely courage.

He now removed to Derby; and having clear information that Shrewsbury was at his devotion, continued his march to that town; and, collecting all his forces in that strong and pleasant situation, was enabled to organise them for taking the field in security, and to keep up his correspondence with Worcester, — a city zealously affected to the royal cause. Soon after the King left Nottingham, the Earl of Essex marched from Northampton with his whole army towards Worcester, and, as he traversed Warwickshire, placed garrisons of foot both in Warwick and Coventry. It so chanced that, by these dispositions, the regiment to which Cuthbert belonged was stationed for a time at Warwick.

Sir Oliver Heywood had been disappointed of his wishes by an attack of gout so very severe, that it quite disabled him; and although he had contrived to present himself before the King at Stoneleigh, the effort had thrown him back, and reduced him to the helplessness of a cripple.

He was therefore compelled to forego his intention of repairing to Nottingham and joining the levy. Under these circumstances he was willing to remain shut up at Milverton House, and to abide all chances and all consequences which might follow on that course, when the army of the Parliament should enter the county. But Juxon warmly represented to him the great imprudence of this unnecessary risk, and advised him to seek a temporary residence in a more protected situation. With a wise forethought he recommended Oxford; observing that it was at present occupied for the King; and, if his Majesty could make head against his enemies, would undoubtedly become the royal quarters, in the event of his not being fortunate enough to recover the capital before winter. It was true that in the interval which must pass before the King could take the field, and advance in strength, the University of Oxford might be exposed to a visit of some division of the Parliamentary forces; but it was not probable that private families lodging there without show would be seriously molested:—whereas

it was almost certain that the country mansion of any Royalist of like consideration with himself would be subjected to a visitation of a very insulting and rude nature. Sir Oliver yielded to this sensible advice; and as soon as the King quitted Nottingham he departed from Milverton. Jane and Sophia Lambert accompanied Katharine Heywood to Oxford; and Juxon having escorted the party on their first day's journey, took leave of them with the best composure which he could, and, without betraying the depth and tenderness of his solicitude by one look or tone of dejection, returned with all speed to Old Beech.

It was near midnight when he approached the village; and by the obscure light of a moonless but clear sky he discerned in the lane before him two men moving about at a point where another road crossed it. As a gate on his right hand opened into a large field, he dismounted, and leading in his horse, fastened it to a hedge-stake, and stole forward softly on foot by a pathway, leading to the point where the roads crossed. Just as he reached the spot, a dis-

turbed bird nestled in a bush. "Who goes there?" said a gruff voice. Juxon remained perfectly still, and saw two sentinels, one a pikeman, and the other a musketeer, who now ceased their pacing, and stood halted, fronting the lane end.

"It is nobody," replied the comrade of the soldier who had given the challenge: — "this is the second time thou hast been fooled to-night."

"Thou art the fool, deaf dunderhead, and wouldst not hear a troop of horse till they were down on thee: — what dost thou know of the wars, bumpkin? I tell thee I heard a horse at the far end of yon lane as clear as I hear thy clapper; and there may be royal troopers closer than we think for. Dost mind? when I fire, take to thy scrapers, and join the post at the barn."

"Well, call me bumpkin as you will, you may be right: I warn't thinking about horses, nor listening, you see. Your ears are sharp enough for both; — a plague o'the Parliament folk; — I was thinking about them pretty bodies that wear white caps and yellow kerchiefs. I was to ha' been wed, man, at Michaelmas,

but for all this to do about the litia: what's the King done to me?"

"Why you talk like a fool: hold your tongue. — Who goes there?" again roared the old musketeer, — but Juxon kept a breathless silence. — "You talk like a fool. Pay is pay, and victuals victuals, and one side as good as t' other; and ours will be the best for booty, man."

"Booty! what's that?"

"Why you must be a queer simpleton not to know: why money, and plate, and rich gear, and wines, and grub of all sorts; all's fish that comes to net, man: that's the best part of a soldier's life."

"Why what's he got to do with them things, if they beynt his'n?"

"Beynt his'n!" said the old soldier with a tone of contempt: "why make 'em his'n."

"Why that's what I call plain picking and stealing; and it's taught in the Catechiz that you musn't do that."

"Ay, that's all very well for brats at a parson's village school; but that wo'n't do for

them that know better. Besides, the Catechiz, as you call it, is no good now; it's all wrong foundation."

" Well, while I ha' got hands to get my living I don't want gold nor silver : I never heard one of your rich folk whistle in all my born days; and as for your madams, why my Madge has a laughing face that shames them. Dang it, I wish I were back with her, and you might soldier and the Roundheads might preach long enough afore I'd come among ye."

" Why I don't say any thing for those fellows that pray and preach; and sometimes I am afraid they'll stand between a good soldier and his right, and wo'n't let him have his fair share of plunder. There's that grave, demure leeftenant they call Cuthbert drove me and two more out of the parson's orchard this very afternoon before I mounted duty. He looks too sharp after other people's business, that godly rogue; and if ever I catch him tripping in a thick smoke, I'll give him a rap on the sconce shall make him sleep sound enough ever after."

“Thou shalt never hurt a hair of his head while I am by,” said the rustic soldier : “he’s a kind, fair-spoken gentleman as ever stepped in shoe-leather.”

“Tut ! you ’re both of a kidney — both fools alike — I ’ve been throwing away my breath on. Keep your own path, and keep moving,” said the musketeer, and resumed his own cross beat in a surly silence.

Warned by this adventure that Parliament soldiers were quartered for the night in Old Beech, and by the mention of Cuthbert’s name, and the anecdote connected with it, that he had a friend among the hostile party, who would, as far as possible, protect his interests, Juxon instantly resolved to pass round by another road, and put up at a detached farm-house a quarter of a mile to the north of the village, where he could gain more accurate information of their doings, and judge how to act in the morning. He was turning about quietly, to steal off and get back to his horse, when his attention was again arrested by the musketeer

might innocently have caused. Nor was the surprise greater to them than to himself, when he saw Katharine Heywood and Jane Lambert before him.

CHAP. VIII.

My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

SIDNEY.

WHEN the painter, who followed Francis Heywood from the boat, saw the affecting situation of the parties, and discerned clearly, at a glance, that they were not only well acquainted with each other, but apparently suffering from very deep and embarrassing emotions, he withdrew. There was something in this meeting of Francis and Katharine, under present circumstances, so mournful, that Jane Lambert, from a sympathy with their sacred feelings, walked to a short distance from the spot, and left them together. They stood alone; they were both pale; both trembling; the greeting of the embrace, and the utterance of each other's names, had already passed in the presence of Jane. Silence was first broken by Francis. "I

bless the leading of my better angel for bringing me here this evening. Oh, Katharine, how I have longed for an interview with you : that blessing is come ; it is a boon of Providence ; we meet again : once more I have heard your lips pronounce my name ; once more I gaze upon the living form which has dwelt with me as a bright shadow ; the comfort of my wanderings and toils ; the cherished idol of my lonesome hours ; the household image that gladdened my solitary lodging. Nay, do not seek to silence me ; do not avert your eyes from me ; let not displeasure cloud your glorious brow. I have loved you long, faithfully, and well. I hail this meeting as an omen of Heaven's favour : the hour will come that I may dare ask thee of thy father without shame or fear."

" Francis, that hour will never come ; it was an unhappy hour in which we first became acquainted."

" Oh, say not so : from that sweet hour I date a happiness that cannot die : why look so grave upon me ? You cannot quench my love : — it grew as does the flower which with a

constancy looks ever to the sun. Thou art a sun to me; and till I am cut down by the swift scythe of war, or wither in decay, thus will it ever be."

"Oh, Francis, who hath bewitched you? Why did you return to England? Why did you leave the green savannas of the New World, and your pure and peaceful labours, for scenes of strife and of rebellion? Away — afar — separated from me by the stormy ocean — and too painfully conscious myself that the course of our true love never could run smooth — I had a comfort in your absence. We are divided in time, was my thought — but not for ever. There is a high and distant region, where we may meet again to part no more; — but now, Francis — it is not too late — put off these arms — return to America. Here, now, let us take our last and long farewell. Return to your father, and give me back the happiness of knowing that he who loves me may be, without a crime, beloved again. Yes — I have loved you well. I have known that our union was impossible; — to honour a parent's will is the

duty of a child. But hear me, Francis:— if all such obstacles were by some magic power removed,— if fortune crowned you with all those gifts of wealth and station, which so generally secure the consent of fathers and the approval of the world, — never would I accept the hand of that man, who had raised his sword against his king.”

While Katharine was delivering this earnest, fond remonstrance, with all the tenderness of a woman, but with a tone of decision towards the close at once solemn and mournful, Francis stood pale and attentive, with eyes that regarded her countenance admiringly. He remained silent for more than a minute after she had ceased from speaking, as if waiting to hear more; then coming closer to her, he took her hand, gazed on her with intense affection, and slowly answered,—

“ With due deliberation of my deed, I took commission of the Parliament, and swore the oath prescribed ; and I will keep it, Katharine, as a soldier should. You live at home, as women use to do, and therefore cannot know the

truth of this great nation's quarrel with its king. Spirits there are in this bad world, to whom their own security and peace bring no content, while any are debarred a common right. Such lead the people now; such, standing up in arms, demand for all, true liberty — and I am with them. The anointed head of England's king is to me, as to you, sacred, and I would defend it from the swords of my own squadrons should any dare to threaten it. You have none near you, my beloved Katharine, to show you things in their true colours, and your gentle and pious fear of evil misleads your better judgment."

"Francis, I thank God I live apart from the great world, and hear but little of their teaching; but this I know, nations are families, and he that slays his brother in any quarrel commits a sin, and he that puts forth his hand against a nation's father is tempted to a crime so like to parricide, that the laws do visit treason with the same punishment. I'll pray for thee, cousin, — pray that some power divine

may turn thy deceived heart, — may touch it with the spirit of peace, and love, and holy fear. Lay not the flattering unction to your soul, that the cause of true religion, or of true liberty, can be promoted by the sword of rebellion. It will turn into your own generous bosom hereafter, and pierce you through with sorrows.”

“ Well, Katharine, a nation is a family ; but if some of the children do poison a father’s mind against others, and these last rise up to punish their treachery, at whose door lieth the sin ? ”

“ My heart is too heavy, Francis, to deal with you in argument. Sure I am, that you feel persuaded in your own mind of the truth of that view which lures you on to misery. Oh, that I could move thee. Francis, from the tender age at which I kneeled upon a mother’s lap, and lisped my infant prayer, I was taught to love and to reverence the church in which I was baptized ; to worship in her courts ; to kneel before her altars ; and now I may not see her in the dust without a pang.”

“Katharine, I would sooner this arm should rot than that it should violate a church, or desecrate one pillar of the temple; but all that are called Israel are not Israel. There are unseemly spots upon the raiment of the King's daughter. She will come forth more glorious for purification. Fear not, my gentle cousin, fear not, all will yet be well.”

“Not so — not so; my heart more truly tells some fatal end. What scarf is that upon thy shoulder? Where is thy king? Doth not his sacred head even now pillow upon thorns? His throne! his crown! where are they? by whom assailed? by whom defended?”

“The true enemies of the King, the true foes of the church, are gathered about the royal person; have poisoned his ear; have turned the generous blood of a princely heart to the black and bitter stream that swells the veins of tyrants. The best friends both of the church and of the King march to free them and to reinstate them in the love of all the people.”

“Oh, that it were so, Francis — were truly

so ! Is Falkland in your ranks ? Oh, that I had a tongue of persuasion to win you back again ! Oh, that you were riding among your king's defenders !”

“ Katharine, by the sweet sacredness of my deep and constant love for you, ask me not that which I could never do with honour. Beneath the cope of heaven there walks no being whose wish is such a law to me as thine. My services are pledged — my colours chosen. My heart is in the cause. If thou couldst give to me thy precious self in marriage, as the mighty price of my desertion, I were unworthy of thee — we should be unworthy of each other. Our fall would be beyond the common lapse of false mankind. Even in our wedding garments our love would die.”

“ Lord of my constant heart, forget my words : — I know not what they meant — I know not how I spake them. Sorrow, and fear, and love, and dark forebodings, do half bewilder me. I would not have thee other than thou art in any thing. Thy heart is no traitor's heart. Delusion, bright as is the garment of

an archangel, goes before thee ; and in Heaven's chosen squadrons you shall be one day marshalled. Whene'er thou fallest in the battle, I shall know it : — the stars will tell it me : Francis, thou wilt be taken away from me, — I know it : — a presage dark and cold overshadows me."

" Nay, love, that fear is idle ; 't is a passing weakness. Nor time, nor space, nor life, nor death, can e'er divide our loves. In all I think, in all I do, you are present with me. Spirits are not confined : — in lonely forest haunts, across the wide Atlantic, I have had thee with me, Katharine, *visibly with me* ; and I do know by the mysterious sympathy between us, that thou hast seen me sit with thee, beneath thy favourite cedar, when ocean rolled between us. This is the high and glorious privilege of love like ours. Come to my heart : — be folded there in one such fond embrace as may live in memory's cup to be a daily nectar." He pressed her majestic form to his manly breast, and bowed his head upon her shoulder. Just then a trumpet sounded from the city.

He strained her yet closer to his heart, then cast his eyes around with eager glance, and made signal with his hand till Jane observed him and came up :— to her he passed his pale and silent charge with soft and reverent action, and, with the quick farewell of soldiers' partings, broke suddenly away.

CHAP. IX.

He calls us rebels, traitors ; and will scourge with haughty arms this hateful name in us.

Henry IV.

ON the cold foggy evening of October the 22d, 1642, the brigade of foot to which the regiment of Cuthbert Noble belonged took up its ground for the night in an open field to the north of the village of Keinton, in which the Earl of Essex fixed his head-quarters. The armies of the King and the Parliament had been several days on the march, both moving in the same direction, on lines of route some twenty miles asunder. Both the King and Essex were well resolved to fight a battle when the fit opportunity should offer ; and it was the common talk of the soldiers on both sides that they should soon come to blows. Nevertheless, there

was little thought in either camp that they were on the very eve of an engagement, or, indeed, that the main bodies lay so convenient to each other as to fight on the morrow. As soon as the guards were posted, the pikemen and musketeers of Maxwell's regiment piled their arms in ranks, and were allowed to make such fires as they could. The country being open, and bare of wood, these fires were comfortless and short lived. By a flickering flame, fed with the small wood of the few bushes that grew near, Cuthbert Noble and Randal ate a slender supper of dry bread and salt herring, which they washed down with a weak draught of cold mixture, but faintly tinged with strong waters. "The Saxons," said Randal, who was a very hardy man, "call this month the wine month, or *Wyn Monath* ; certainly there must have been milder seasons in England formerly than we experience now ; for it is impossible to fancy a vintage during such sharp frosts as these."—"Yes," said Cuthbert, "yes." Randal smiled at a reply which bespoke inattention and discomposure, then added, "Master Cuthbert, I

counted on seeing you a little proud of your first night in camp: we must all endure hardness as good soldiers."

"True," answered Cuthbert, recovering himself: "what is a little cold and a little hunger compared to what thousands of Christian men have in all ages endured, and do in all ages endure for the truth? It is a great cause — a holy cause. I was only thinking at the moment that it is a pity we had not taken a little better care of our bread and of that bottle of strong waters: there is a loaf missing, and the bottle is almost empty. But what petty trifles these are; how much below the dignity of our nature: you are right, Randal; I am, and I ought to be, happy; see how comfortable the Colonel has made himself;" so saying, he pointed to where Maxwell sat, near the only good fire on the ground, with a few officers round him. He was enveloped in a large cloak, — a fur cap was drawn over his ears, — he was leaning with his back against a pack-saddle; and as the smoke of his pipe issued in warm clouds

from his mouth he looked as much at his ease as if seated in a chimney corner by the brightest fireside in the kingdom.

“ Ay,” said Randal, “ he is an old campaigner, and use is second nature; for myself, as long as I am warmly clad, for no other comfort do I care: I hate a pipe, and am not fond of a fire.” Now Randal was wrapped up in an outer coat of the thickest woollen; and Cuthbert himself, being also clothed in a large warm mantle, checked his disposition to complain, and, after a little conversation of a better kind, they both composed themselves to sleep. About two or three hours after he had lain down he was awakened by a sensation of extreme cold. He instantly discovered the cause: his mantle had been stripped off, and he was left without any other covering than the clothes in which he stood. Most of the camp fires were already extinguished, or only emitted a very faint light from the expiring embers. The stars in the deep blue sky above shone with the most vivid lustre: the fog had disappeared; and through

the clear gloom of night he could see outlines of the piles of arms and of the groups of sleeping soldiers. Immediately near him lay Randal in a profound sleep : lifting a half-burned brand, he saw by the light which it gave as he waved it around that the mantle was nowhere near the spot. He went among the groups which were not far off to search for it ; but the growl and the curse of a brawny pikeman, over whom he chanced to stumble, deterred him from his pursuit ; and he had no other resource than to pace up and down in a vacant space of ground, that he might keep himself warm by exertion. In vain he tried to raise his mind to heavenly contemplations ; in vain he sought to warm his zeal by picturing the sad and severe sublimities of battle and of victory ; and the price of blood which he might soon be called upon, and which he was ready to pay, for the triumph of his cause. For great sacrifices he was eager ; for petty troubles he was wholly unprepared ; therefore the night wore away in coldness and discontent.

Just as the day was breaking, he observed a man, in the garb of a Puritan, riding leisurely along the lines, and apparently taking a very particular notice of the position and number of the troops. What it was in the manner of the man that awakened the suspicions of Cuthbert is uncertain, but he felt impelled to go closer, and examine him. Accordingly, he crossed towards the quarter-guard, where he observed him stop and enter into conversation with the sergeant. The man's back was towards Cuthbert, — thus he was able to approach the quarter-guard without being perceived by the stranger. No sooner did Cuthbert catch the tone of his voice than he immediately recognised it to be that of the roguish hypocrite who had slept in the same chamber with him at the inn in Aylesbury, two years before, and had stolen his purse and the horse lent him by Sir Oliver Heywood. The knave, not recollecting Cuthbert in his new dress, continued to pursue his inquiries after he came up in the same canting phraseology, and even addressed some questions to Cuthbert himself; but the latter, suddenly

seizing the bridle of his beast, directed the sergeant to pull him out of his saddle, which was instantly and adroitly done, and gave him in charge as a thief and a horse-stealer, and on suspicion of being a spy. The wretch was so panic-stricken that he made no effort to conceal or destroy any of the proofs which were found upon him, when they proceeded to search his person. These papers consisted of a letter to Prince Rupert — another, without a signature, saying that two squadrons of the Parliamentary horse were prepared to desert as soon as the armies met — and a third, containing an accurate return of the strength of Essex's main body, and an estimate of the numbers left behind in garrisons, and on other duties. He was taken before Colonel Maxwell; by him sent forthwith to the Earl of Essex, who, having gotten all the information which the confused hypocrite could give, directed him to be hanged in front of the lines, before the troops marched. The rogue died like a dog and a dastard, imploring mercy with loud and feverish howls, till, the noose being fastened tight about his

neck, and made secure to a strong branch on the only tree near the camp, the forage cart, on which he had been dragged beneath it, was driven away, and he suddenly fell, and swung slowly to and fro before the silent and stern battalions which were assembled upon the ground in arms.

Such was the Sabbath morning of October the 23d, — far different in prospect and in promise from those of his youthful days at Cheddar. The distant sound of trumpets told that the divisions of horse were already in motion; the drums beat; many a shrill fife pierced the ear; and the columns of foot slowly followed. The army had scarcely advanced a mile before the troops were halted; and they could all distinctly see a fair body of horse on the top of a high level, called Edge Hill, not more than a good mile in front. At the same moment, the Earl of Essex rode past Maxwell's regiment, and said, in the hearing of Cuthbert, —

“Maxwell, I shall give you plenty of work to-day, for I know I may reckon on your regiment safely.”

“ My Lord, we ’re all ready and willing,” was the Colonel’s brief reply.

The order now came for drawing up the army in order of battle. Near Keinton, on the right, were some hedges and enclosures : among these were placed the musketeers and pikemen ; and one of the most important posts was assigned to the regiment in which Cuthbert served. There were not above two regiments of horse in this wing, where the ground was narrowest ; but in the left wing was placed a thousand horse under Ramsey. The reserve of horse was commanded by the Earl of Bedford, assisted by Sir William Balfour : between the Parliamentarians and the royal position, on Edge Hill, it was a fair open country. Essex having thus chosen his ground, stood still in a defensive posture, and directed three cannon to be discharged as a defiance and a challenge to the royal army : they answered readily on their part with two shot from a battery of field guns on the brow of their position. However, many of their foot regiments were quartered seven or

eight miles from the main body, and had that distance to march to the rendezvous. It was past one of the clock before the King's forces marched down the hill, with the King's standard waving in the centre of his regiment of guards. They made a very fine and gallant appearance, especially their horse. Their trumpets sounded out in the distance, very grand to hear, and those upon Essex's left wing sounded also. It was a glorious sight to see the royal forces move steadily on, in two lines, with bodies of reserve. They numbered not less than eighteen thousand men, and the army of Essex was very little superior in strength; for two of his best regiments of foot, and one of his horse regiments, were a day's march behind him. However, the Parliament soldiers were no less ready for the fray than their eager adversaries.

During the solemn pause before the battle, while the hosts were drawing up face to face, and the dispositions for the attack were completing, Cuthbert felt an unaccountable sadness on his spirits. He could well imagine, from all that he heard and saw, that the feelings of a

true soldier, standing opposite an army of hostile invaders, and about to fight for the altars and the hearths of his native land, must be of a most exalted and enviable description, — but how different were his. The royal standard of England was floating in the adverse line, and English voices were marshalling it for the onset : his own pupil, young Arthur Heywood, was riding in those ranks.

“ Remember, men,” said the commanding voice of Maxwell, “ to be silent and steady : wait for the order : reserve your fire to the last moment, musketeers ; and keep your ranks, pikemen, when it comes to the push. By God’s help, we’ll drive them up that hill in worse order than they are coming down.”

In another minute there broke a sudden flash from the enemy’s line : close followed the white smoke and the thundering echo ; and, by the very side of Cuthbert, a sergeant was struck down dead.

“ Pick up Sergeant Bond’s partisan,” said the sergeant-major of the regiment as he was passing by : “ pick it up, you Tibbs,” he repeated,

in a sharp cold tone, to a supernumerary sergeant attached to the same company, and who had only a sword.

“Is this the glorious battle death?” said Cuthbert to himself, — but he had no leisure for thought: the roar of shotted guns began on both sides, and the battle fiercely opened. The musketeers of the regiment were thrown out towards a hedge, a little in front of the ground occupied by the pikemen; and a canopy of smoke soon rose above them all, veiling the golden sun and the blue heavens, and giving to all the forms and faces of those around, whether friends or foes, a shadowy indistinctness.

In the midst of all this apparent confusion, governing commands were given by beat of drum, or by the swift and intelligent service of chosen aids, or by the personal presence and loud voice, at the particular point where they were needed, of Essex himself, who commanded and fought with his foot throughout the day. Captain Ruddiman, who commanded the company of pikemen to which Cuthbert belonged, did not appear to relish the cannon balls;

feeling very naturally, that however ready and able to encounter the Royalists at close quarters, there was no mode of guarding against a round iron shot; nor was he much better pleased with the spitting and whistling of musket-balls. However, being a very brave man, he stood them all as steady as a sign-post, and rebuked Lieutenant Sippets for bobbing up and down in a very unsoldier-like fashion. Meanwhile Cuthbert was expressly called by Maxwell to go to the front, and take charge of a company of musketeers, the officers of which were all killed or wounded. He ran eagerly forward and was soon hotly engaged; but the royal dragoons coming up to the support of their foot, and both forcing their way on with ardour, the musketeers were withdrawn by Maxwell behind the reserve of pikemen; and these moving up in good and compact order soon came to a gallant push of pike, and drove back the enemy with severe loss; at the same time the musketeers stoutly supported the push of pike with their clubbed muskets, and made a bloody carnage in the royal ranks.

In this *mêlée* Cuthbert owed his life to that expertness at the sword exercise for which he was indebted to the lessons of George Juxon ; for by a dexterous parry he beat off the assault of a stout Royalist officer, who ran at him as he was grasping at a colour, the bearer of which had stumbled, and, killing him by a home thrust through the body, succeeded in taking the colour.

In the pause which followed on the repulse of this attack Cuthbert received the high praise of Maxwell, and the honest congratulations of Captain Ruddiman, who, at close quarters, had himself done good service among the Royalists, making not a few bite the dust beneath the blows of a heavy poll-axe which he had found upon the field. Both parties now for awhile took wind and breath ; but soon again the horse of Essex's right wing was led by Sir William Balfour against the point of the King's left. Their squadrons passed the flank of Maxwell's regiment, as they advanced at a walk to take their ground before they formed up for the charge ; and Francis Heywood, already

distinguished by his brilliant conduct at the unfortunate affair of Pershore, passed so close to Cuthbert that they shook hands. It scarcely seemed a minute from this friendly greeting ere their trumpets sounded the charge, and with a desperate fury they galloped towards the enemy. The first line broke before them: the second was staggered; but two regiments of the royal dragoons, in reserve, came swiftly to their aid, and by the fire of their long carbines struck down a great many of the Parliament horse, and following this up by a charge, compelled them to wheel about. The royal foot now advanced again, and made a furious attack upon the right of Essex, and pushed up to the very mouths of his cannon, and drove away the gunners and spiked several of the guns; but this artillery was valiantly won back by the Parliamentarians: and the brigade of foot in which Maxwell's regiment fought actually charged the royal dragoons with their pikes, and drove them back in disorder, with the loss of a great many men and horses. It so hap-

pened, in this last movement, that when the two parties were close together, Cuthbert caught a momentary but a very distinct view of the fine countenance of young Arthur Heywood, and heard him cry aloud, "Strike home, lads, for God and the King!" The smoke of battle soon hid the vision, and the royal dragoons were compelled to retire.

Prince Rupert had beaten the left wing of Essex, and was in full pursuit; but as night drew on the horsemen of the Prince were seen returning to the field of battle; and as the right wing had maintained its ground stubbornly, the battle ended by the King retiring to the hills, and leaving Essex in possession of the field, where he kept his troops together throughout the night. Both sides laid claim to the victory, and both gained some advantages in the fight, but their losses were very heavy and nearly equal. However, Essex slept upon the field of battle, and was joined in the night by most of the fugitives from his left wing, and was further reinforced by the arrival of two good regiments of foot and one of horse.

The sun had no sooner set on the evening of the battle than it began to freeze hard; and it being Cuthbert's turn for outline guard, he was posted at the end of a considerable enclosure, near some large gaps, which had been made by the enemy in their attacks to admit of their bringing up their cannon and their cavalry. The slaughter near this spot had been considerable, and Cuthbert had to plant his sentinels among mangled and naked corpses; but in the gloom and obscurity of night the only appearance they presented was that of pallid and stony objects without a shape. He was surprised to find himself insensible to any feeling but the low animal sensations of hunger, cold, and weariness. He sat round the watch fire with the men composing the guard, and ate ravenously of such coarse provisions as were issued. His share of the plunder had been a large warm horseman's cloak, which his corporal had found among the slain of the King's guards, and which he now folded about him as he lay down to rest with a very thankful but

somewhat a selfish sense of comfort. He gave orders that he should be waked at every relief of the sentinels, and then sunk into a deep slumber, from which he was aroused, within two hours, to go his rounds. When he returned from them all disposition for sleep had departed. He trimmed the watch fire, and was soon the only one awake near the spot except the sentinel. A little book, with silver corners and clasps, lay on the ground, where it had apparently been thrown by one of the soldiers: it attracted the eye of Cuthbert by the gleaming of its silver clasps, — he took it up; the covers were smeared with dirt: he opened it, — it was a Book of Common Prayer: a leaf was folded down at the collect for the day; and in the inside of the cover was written the following quotation from George Herbert: —

“Sundays observe: — think, when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels' music.”

He knew the handwriting; it was that of Katharine: he knew the book; he remembered the

Sabbath morning when she first presented it to her cousin Arthur. He thought upon that glimpse which he had caught of his pupil's countenance in the battle, and he shuddered with apprehensions.

CHAP .X.

Great God ! there is no safety here below ;
Thou art my fortress ; thou that seem'st my foe,
'Tis thou that strik'st the stroke, must guard the blow.

QUARLES.

ALTHOUGH the malice of the hypocrite Daws had been disappointed by the result of his wicked artifices at Cheddar fair, and the worthy Noble had been saved from the injury and ruin which a lawless rabble were instigated to inflict on that peaceful man of God, yet Daws, being unsuspected and secure from detection, did not relax his efforts for the persecution and ejection of Noble.

He contrived to have him haled before a committee of religious inquiry which visited those parts soon after ; but here again he was baffled : for one of the commissioners being pricked in his conscience by observing the

godly simplicity of the good parson of Cheddar, and the sincerity of his love to the blessed Saviour of the world, procured his dismissal from that ordeal unharmed. Nevertheless Daws continued to work secretly for his own ends, and gave himself no rest in the pursuit of his great object. He had the reputation of great strictness and sanctity as a minister,—and the outward man imposed upon many; in his heart he cared not for the souls of men; his sins were those which often and long escape the detection of the world, and which can be indulged under the cloak of religious zeal without exciting the suspicions of any, but those honest and sagacious persons who can detect a character by indications of its spirit too slight and fine to be admitted as important by the multitude. He was avaricious and tyrannical: money was his idol; and to subject the minds of a congregation was his next delight. From his pulpit he dealt forth the most fierce and cruel fulminations against all unbelievers. Nor was he without many trembling followers, whom he scolded and

comforted, according to the caprice of his own temper.

“ He damned the sins he had no mind to,
And spared the few he was inclined to.”

In his creed, the prayers and alms of any one who did not exactly entertain his notions of faith were sins, and would be visited as such. Now Parson Noble was a minister who bowed his knees before the Father of mercies as a self-abased sinner, confessing himself without grace or strength to will or to do, save of God's free mercy, communicated through and for Christ's sake. He taught all his people that if they asked the gifts and graces of repentance and faith in that precious name they could not be denied, and should never be sent empty away : to proclaim the message of peace and reconciliation was his delight ; to invite all freely, to tell of a pardon to the human race, which, under the present dispensation of mercy, was the common right of all who were *willing* to accept it, was his constant practice ; and he

showed them plainly that if they came not to the light, it was because they loved darkness; because they could not part with their sins, and shrunk from the Gospel as a rule of life. "Love," he would say, "worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Love is keeping the commandments: God is love, from whom they came. Jesus is love, by whom they were taught, magnified, and perfectly obeyed, that in his sacrifice of himself, as a pure and spotless victim, we might have an all-sufficient atonement, and hope towards a God who had taken our nature upon him, and been manifest in the flesh." Now Daws held that Noble was a blind leader of the blind, and that both would fall into the ditch; and he desired, first, the proceeds of Cheddar living in his pocket, and, next, the gratification of telling the flock of Noble that they were one and all in the broad road to destruction.

Nor did this insidious priest fail to spread all sorts of calumnies about the poor uncon-

scious vicar, and to irritate many furious zealots against him. He kept up a constant correspondence with a political partisan in London, to whom he gave much information on local and county matters, stretching his invention not a little when he had to tell any thing against the Royalists of those parts. By this means he got a name as a person well affected to the Parliament, and greatly interested in the cause of religious liberty.

It so happened, that, in the November immediately following the breaking out of the war, and the great battle of Keinton, a body of Parliamentary horse being quartered in his neighbourhood, Daws found a fit instrument for his purposes on Cheddar, in a most furious and bigotted fanatic, who commanded a troop of horse. This man was easily persuaded that he could not render a more acceptable service to God than by destroying with fire and sword all places, all persons, and all things, which were, in his own view, defiled, and idolatrous, and impure; and he therefore sallied forth

against the church and the parson of Cheddar as he would against a temple and a priest of Baal.

On the day on which old Noble was ejected from Cheddar, with many circumstances of cruelty and hardship, he arose, as usual, with some fears, but with unshaken trust in the goodness and mercy of an all-wise and almighty Father. The day was cold, and not a sun-beam was admitted through the cloud and gloom which brooded over all things. It chanced that the stout and resolute old franklin Blount had determined that his grandchild should be publicly baptized at the same ancient font at which his own venerable forehead had been signed with the sign of the cross. There was some doubt in the mind of his son-in-law, Hargood, whether it was prudent at that moment of busy persecution, on the part of the county committee, to make so open a display of devout attachment to the hallowed ceremony of a christening. His loving daughter, from a tender apprehension about her infant's safety, if any thing should fall out amiss, would have stolen

to church, at the earliest possible hour, and in the most quiet manner. However, habits of submission to her father, formed by an admiration of his character, were of so long a growth, and so deeply rooted, that the remonstrance of her fears was not ventured on; indeed Blount would have held it craven to yield to the timid suggestions of prudence, where he looked to a principle in his conduct. It is not improbable that some shadow of a domestic tragedy had been cast upon the old man's solitary thoughts; for, within a few days past, there had been observable in his manner a mixture of severity and gentleness at once strange and affecting. He had twice been found in the large oak parlour alone, reading from the Book of Martyrs, which was there chained upon a tall desk. It is true that on both these occasions he had whistled and walked away quick; but it was afterwards remembered. Howbeit, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, there issued from the porch of the franklin's old mansion a small party consisting of about eight persons, male and female: one of the last bore

in her arms an infant so folded up and hidden in a large mantle of thick white woollen, that nothing but a little outline of the babe could be seen, and not a breath of the keen wintry wind could penetrate to its tender frame. They moved slowly, and in a formal order up the long straggling street; and all the villagers who met them by the way, or looked at them from their doors, saluted them with bows and good words, but with evident and anxious wonder. A faithful woodman ventured to go close and whisper to Master Blount that he was just come in from Axbridge, and saw some of the rascal Roundheads mustering, and that he heard say, at the Old Pack-horse Inn, that they were going to march for Wells by the road of Cheddar. "Well, let them come," said the franklin; "we are not doing any thing to be ashamed of: let them see us doing as their forefathers did before us, and redden in the face for their own falsehood; 'church and king' is an old cry and a good one: out upon the knaves! — God will defend his own."

The party went forward; and having reached

the churchyard, passed into the church by the low chancel door, walked down the great aisle, and turned into the southern transept. Here stood the font; here the worthy parson awaited them, and his wife also, who was by a promise of long date to stand as godmother to the child. The old stone font, round which this pious family were assembled, had long been an object of great veneration to the inhabitants of Cheddar. It was octagonal in form, and supported upon a clustered shaft of Purbeck marble. The compartments on its sides were sculptured with scenes from Holy Writ. In one was represented the circumcision of Christ; in another the same blessed Lord was figured in manhood, with a little child in his arms, and his disciples standing round: through age and injury the subjects in the other compartments were no longer discernible.

Above the font was a window of painted glass, which, as there was no light of the sun to illuminate its gorgeous groups, did only present to the eye a dim cold grandeur;—a grave and visionary glory, through which, as in the pages

of unaccomplished prophecy, might be caught bright glimpses of pale and celestial faces, and yet garments crimson withal, as though they had been rolled in blood.

In this solemn light, and around this sacred font, the family of Blount reverently kneeled, and the service proceeded. The babe lay still and unconscious in the arms of the old franklin's wife; and nothing told of its young life but a soft breath from parted lips, and a faint flush upon a waxen cheek. By its side knelt the fair mother, delicate and colourless, with eyes bent on the ground, and a forehead over which fears flitted, and disturbed her prayers.

Of all the party none save the sweet infant was so calm as Blount himself. Upon the throne of the old man's heart his God was seated, and his soul was at peace. In fancy and in spirit he was again the subject of that holy rite. When Noble took the babe in his arms, and it opened its blue eyes and stretched out its little helpless hands, and as it felt the sprinkled water, and was signed with the sign of the cross, gave that little cry for which

mother and nurse listen so fondly, a few large tears dropped from the eyelids of the stalwart franklin, and the voice of Noble faltered a little as he saw them fall. The solemn declaration by which the child is received into Christ's flock was completed, and was responded to by the deep and fervent Amen of Blount, and the gentler tones of those around him; and the good parson was proceeding to the thanksgiving that follows, when that fearful sound, which is made up of the trampling of horses, and the rattle of harness, and the blast of the trumpet, was heard at the church doors in the opposite transept. Their heavy leaves were thrown open with a sudden and violent crash, and two of the horsemen rode into the body of the church, accompanied by three severe and sour looking persons in sad coloured doublets, and narrow crowned hats, and followed by some low rabble, with whom, in fear and curiosity, a few of the good folk of Cheddar intermingled.

"I have a message for thee, thou priest of Baal, — thou blind leader of the blind, — thou whited wall," said he, whose caparisons bespoke

him the chief, laying the flat of his sword with a smart stroke upon the neck of Noble. "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting: thou must come with me; thy mummeries and thy knaveries shall no more pollute the sanctuary."

"Dost thou not fear God?" said the meek but undaunted Noble, with a firm voice and unshrinking mien. "Dost thou not fear God, that thus thou comest to his holy temple? To what manner of man was it told, that it were better for him a millstone were tied about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones? I tell thee, the angel of that helpless babe doth, even now, behold the face of his Father, which is in heaven, and beareth witness against thee. — Go forth. I myself will follow thee, whithersoever thou wouldest, be it to judgment or to death; but this hoof-clatter in the courts of the Lord is a most abominable sin."

"Now will I do so, and yet more, thou hypocrite, thou whitened sepulchre!" so saying,

the fanatic plunged his spurs into the flanks of his frightened war-horse, but the fretted and gallant beast did only rear, and chafe, and champ the bit. Meanwhile, the young mother, with her child in her bosom, and the other women round her, had sunk back into the corner of the transept in terror. Old Blount and his son-in-law interposed between the horsemen and Noble, and demanded of them loudly to quit the sacred building.

“ I ask ye not,” said he, “ as Christians, for that ye cannot be, but for your manhood’s sake, to suffer, that these poor terrified women pass forth with the infant in peace ; for ourselves, though we be unarmed, we will abide your wrath as best we may.”

“ Let not thine eye pity,” said a harsh voice from behind the horsemen : “ blessed be he that taketh her children and dasheth them against the stones. Woe to the idolaters ! woe ! — The priest shall be slain at the altar, and the water of the Babylonish font shall be red with the blood of sacrifice.”

The frenzied zeal of the willing fanatic being

thus excited, he urged on his powerful steed, and raised his glittering sword. The hot animal by a weighty plunge came breast upon the font, and overthrew and brake it, and the consecrated water was spilled upon the ground. At this sight old Blount, with the strong arm of a Samson, caught at the bridle, and threw back the horse and his rider with so violent a force, that the hoofs slipped upon the smooth pavement, and they fell together; and before they had risen, the old man had caught up a heavy bar of wood near him, and raising the ponderous weapon with both hands, aimed so true and so deadly a blow at the sacrilegious chief that he never moved after; and the life-blood ran from his mouth and ears, and flowing onward, mingled with the water from the
BROKEN FONT.

Every voice was silenced,—every foot was rivetted there where it stood. All were hushed and motionless, and every face looked ghastly. During this awful pause, the aged franklin, exhausted by the mighty and energetic deed, fell back against a seat, and, sinking into it, turned

pale, and his eye-sight became dim. Noble went over and took his hand in alarm, and eagerly inquired, "What is this? what is this? Are you wounded?"

"No," he faintly answered, "not wounded, but—this is—death. Heavenly Father, forgive me, for thy dear Son's sake, for I knew not what I did."

His wife and daughter and his sons now gathered round him; but he was dying, and his words were few. He tried to kiss his infant grandchild, and he said to Noble, with a heavy sigh,—

"Your trials are coming:—I count myself happy, and commit my own dear family and yours to him who remembers mercy in judgment;" and now, letting fall his head on his wife's bosom, he breathed a few times in a struggling convulsive manner, and his spirit returned to the God who gave it.

CHAP. XI.

Even my prayers,
When with most zeal sent upward, are pull'd down,
With strong imaginary doubts and fears,
And in their sudden precipice o'erwhelm me.

MASSINGER.

THE close of the December following the battle of Keinton found Cuthbert in winter quarters at Warwick. His regiment marched into that city on the day before Christmas-day; and, as soon as the men were distributed in their quarters, he walked towards Milverton, from that natural impulse which inclines us all to revisit any spot where we have passed a part, however small, of our mysterious lives.

It was a bright, clear, invigorating day: the ground was firm under the foot, and, though the sun shone out in a cloudless sky, there was so hard a frost that the pathways were clean. The trees glittered in the sun's rays like

frosted silver, and the face of nature looked healthy and cheerful, like the winter season of a hale old age.

The step of Cuthbert was not so fast or active as travellers use in such weather. He walked like one who reluctantly takes exercise, and in company in which he takes no pleasure. He was alone, indeed, but with care and doubt for his companions. Since the battle, he had been advanced to the command of a company of musketeers, and Maxwell had distinguished him by particular attentions. Randal was still his more constant associate; and the petty and disagreeable perplexities to which he had been at first subjected by the uncongenial persons with whom he had been thrown, and by the novelty of the duties to which he had been called, had altogether vanished: for in three months habits are formed, and we become accustomed to any mode of life. To be accustomed, however, is not to be reconciled to it. But this was the least, and the most trifling and despised ingredient in the bitter cup from which Cuthbert daily drank,—

his conscience was not at peace. He drugged it with an opium, extracted, by a very common process, from the precepts and the promises of Scripture; but there was not a day of his life that it did not awake to some doubts and horrors, and the same medicine, dangerous where it is unskilfully applied, was taken to excess. He felt himself embarked in a black ship, with a wild and motley crew, and he dared not own to himself that he mistrusted those who navigated the vessel. Her way was through gloom and danger, and the voyage might, after all, end in shipwreck.

From the day of the battle, he was never seen to smile by any one; and from the severity of his thoughts, his countenance had gathered a sad yet stern complexion, which was not unsuitable to his present fortunes.

In a sort of hope that the sight of Milverton House might beguile his melancholy, might soothe him, by reviving sweet images of past and precious hours, and building, as he walked along, a new fabric of happy and peaceful liberty for his distracted country, he reached

the well known gates of the once hospitable mansion. Absorbed in his reflections, he never raised his eyes to direct them towards the house, till he stood at the very portal. The gates lay upon the ground; the noble edifice was a blackened and a yawning ruin. A sudden and terrific thunder clap, bursting from a serene sky, could not so painfully have startled him. All around was silent — desolately, dreadfully silent; and the sun was bright, and the stony skeleton of the vast dwelling was black. He poured a passionate cry to God: he fell down upon the earth, and petitioned feverishly that the evil one might not hunt him to despair.

When he had in some measure recovered his composure, he rose and walked through the lonely and roofless ruins. The rubbish, which had fallen in when the floors and ceilings of the upper chambers gave way, or were consumed, had been disturbed, and removed in large quantities, to be sifted for any valuable metals which they might contain, so that he could make his way without difficulty, and could still trace distinctly all the lower apartments.

Near the fire-place in the large kitchen, on a part of the wall that had only been scorched, might still be read one of those rude and homely posies which were the delight of our honest forefathers, and might be found alike in the manor-house and the humbler cottage of the husbandman:—

“ At Christmas be merry, and thankful withal,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great with the small ;
Yea all the year long, to the poor let us give,
God's blessing to follow us while we do live.”

And upon the other side of the fire-place was written up,—

“ Play thou the good fellow ; seek none to misdeem ;
Disdain not the honest, though merry they seem ;
For oftentimes seen, no more very a knave,
Than he that doth counterfeit most to be grave.”

These posies brought more to Cuthbert's mind than the memory of the happy Christmas he had once passed within these very walls. The lines, which he had known from his boyhood, were taken from old Thomas Tusser's Book of Husbandry, the favourite manual of the old franklin Blount, and a work of which he re-

membered his father had always been very fond, and which stood upon the book-shelf at Cheddar next the Country Parson of Master George Herbert. All these recollections came upon him at once, and overwhelmed his spirit. He was totally ignorant of all that had been lately enacted at Cheddar, and of the present situation of his father. He had not heard of or from his parents for several months; but his fears for their safety had been quieted by a promise, that especial orders should be sent to all the forces of the Parliament to respect both the persons and the dwellings of all such relations of the officers and men serving the Parliament as did not take up arms against them, whatever might be their known sentiments on affairs of church and state.

How far this line of forbearance had been broken through, and how violently, the ruins around most plainly declared; for he was well assured that Francis Heywood would have omitted no precaution which could possibly have availed to protect the property of Sir Oliver; nor had he been present with the divi-

sion by whom this wanton crime was effected would he have failed to repress it. But when "Havoc!" is once cried, and the dogs of war are once let slip, who shall, who can, restrain them, but he who sitteth in the circle of the heavens?

His fancy became bewildered with the thought of his mother's grief, and the dangers to which she might possibly be exposed, and of the possibility that his father might be suffering the penalty of some bitter persecution by his adherence to the royal cause. He, as was his wont in all extremities of doubt and sorrow, betook himself to the only source of true comfort, when men are guided by the Spirit of truth to a right use of it:—he drew from the bosom of his doublet a small Bible. He implored direction from above; and yet, when he had done so, yielded to the petty superstition of opening the sacred volume suddenly, and taking the first text that presented itself to his eye for his counsellor. The words which he thus read were, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." He smote upon his breast with agony, perused the

chapter of James the Apostle, from whence it was taken, and that which followed. All his resolutions were staggered and shaken. He was in a mood to unbuckle his sword, and to find a lodge in some wilderness where man could not penetrate. "Yet," said he aloud, as pleading his own cause before the invisible throne, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I am not moved by the spirit that lusteth to envy in this great contention against apostasy and spiritual wickedness in high places." In the fervour and agitation of his appeal his Bible fell from his hand, and when he took it up, it opened at that same epistle at the beginning of it; and reading there that he was to count it all joy falling into divers temptations, and that the trying of his faith worked patience, he was again as suddenly recovered to steadfastness, in what he blindly persuaded himself was the battle of the Lord; thus giving a most sad practical proof that he was a waverer, tossed and driven to and fro like a wave of the sea. What further doubts and changes might have coloured his medita-

tions, and his prayers in that desolate and afflicting scene, had he been left alone to brood over all his fears, it is not possible to say; but he was roused and interrupted by the sound of footsteps on the paved path, which led up from the terrace towards the principal entrance, the steps of which yet remained. He stood aside, that the intruder, whoever it might be, should not discover him. To his surprise, it was no other than old Margery of the sand pit. She turned towards the offices as soon as she entered the Hall, and went winding her way through heaps of rubbish, towards an outhouse in the court-yard, the roof of which was still entire. Her aspect, and the echo of her staff and of her footsteps, in that solitary ruin, were very strange and affecting. Afraid of too suddenly alarming the aged and unhappy being, he followed her with light and noiseless steps to the low building, which she entered. Of the two small windows that gave it light one was half open, and having gained it, he could see and hear what was passing within. Laying down her bag and staff, she seated herself on a very

low stool, close by the little fire-place, and applied her breath to the embers. The white ashes flew off, and laid bare the glowing embers. To these she applied a few dry sticks which she had brought with her, and a warm and cheerful flame, accompanied by a light crackling noise, soon blazed comfortably before her.

“ I wonder where the master is this blessed day,” were her first words, “ and Mistress Kate, that was God’s angel to me, and the rest of them. Wherever they are, Christ comfort them, and bless them : they were good friends to me, and to many. I never came to the gate, and went away without a measure of meal and a kind word ; and it was a good day for my poor soul when the beautiful lady first talked to me : ” — she stopped, and put on another stick or two ; — “ and Parson Juxon, that made me leave the pit, and gave me a bit of a cot to myself at Old Beech, where he and I would have been now but for the wars and the villanies of those devils that burned his house over his head, and made a bonfire to roast me, if it had not been

God's will to make 'em fall out about it. They called me 'a child of hell,' I mind: — well, it is not the first time — many a score times gentle and simple have called me the same, till within the last two years, and I thought it was all over, and I got to heaven already; but there's a weary bit yet for me. I hope it wo'n't be long. Now, if parson was here, he'd scold and look pleasant at me, and say, 'God's time's the best time, Margery.' Well, now, I've lost him — God's will be done. I've been a poor sinful body all my days; but I never harmed any more than a curse might, and little ill could that do to any but my own poor self. It's well it couldn't; for if it had been able to kill, I should have sent it after many a one, and might again. God help me! I'll be burnt for a witch some day yet; and, truth to say, I've many a time wished I was one,—but that's all over. I say the Lord's Prayer different now."

Here she clasped and raised her lean and withered hands, and said it in a humble whisper on her knees.

Cuthbert was agitated terribly ; but he dared not speak, he dared not enter.

“ Who shall say,” thought his better mind, “ who shall say that the blessed One, who taught his disciples thus to pray, is not present, dimly seen, perhaps, but felt with secret reverence and affection ? ”

Her prayer said, the old woman put a little earthen pot on the fire, and again seated herself on the stool by the side of it.

“ Ah ! it’s no merry Christmas,” said she, “ here, or any where else ; but I have known a worse ; and I think this is safe hiding, for the folk all think the place haunted. Well, I must thank God, and make the best of it.”

As she ended these words, she began humming the air of an old Christmas carol, and at last sung, in the mournful voice of age, this ancient fragment :—

“ He neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall,
But all in fair linen,
As were babies all ;
He neither shall be rocked
In silver nor in gold,
But in a wooden cradle,
That rocks on the mould.”

At the close he went to the door, and before he entered called her gently by name. The tone of voice in which he spoke had the effect which he intended, and, without any cry of alarm, she rose up quietly and turned round; but she no sooner beheld his military dress than her terror became excessive. It was quite in vain that he attempted to bring himself to her recollection: the fear of being dragged forth and led to the stake was uppermost, and entirely bewildered her. In his person she saw only one of those from whose hands she had so recently escaped, and her shrieks and implorations were agonising to hear. To relieve her he quitted the ruin; and before he was many hundred yards from it had the pain of seeing her on the far side of it hobbling fast towards the cover of the adjoining wood for concealment. He walked to his quarters in a miserable and dejected mood; and as he passed an open church which had apparently been occupied by Parliamentary soldiers, he went in for a moment. It was empty: the tombs and monuments had been broken and their in-

scriptions defaced: not a pane of glass in the tall windows had escaped destruction: a painting over the altar had been hacked to pieces; and, as if in mockery, the tables of God's commandments were left on either side plainly legible, and above, in the midst, might be seen, in letters of gold, the words of that message of mercy which the angels of God sang to the shepherds keeping watch by night, when they announced the advent of Messiah, — *Peace on earth, — good will towards man.*

CHAP. XII.

Thus see we how these ugly furious spirits
Of warre are cloth'd, colour'd, and disguis'd,
With stiles of vertue, honour, seale, and merits,
Whose owne complexion, well anatomis'd,
A mixture is of pride, rage, avarice,
Ambition, lust, and every tragicke vice.

LORD BROOKE.

It is now necessary to relate that treatment of George Juxon to which old Margery alluded in the last chapter. For six weeks after the first visit of the Parliamentary soldiers to Old Beech he successfully maintained his post, and continued to officiate every Sabbath among his people. His house, indeed, had been often beset by small parties of soldiers or by other godly reformers deputed to arrest him, but he was so beloved by the villagers that he was always warned, and was thus enabled to escape their hands or evade their search; nor were any of these parties of a strength sufficient for

attempting acts of violence upon the church or the parsonage. Indeed one of them was fairly braved and driven away by Juxon himself, disguised like a farmer, and aided by his faithful friend the blacksmith and half a dozen more. One Sabbath morning, as he was out upon the watch, in the disguise of a belted woodman, he met a party coming to seize him about a mile from Old Beech, and, having put them on a wrong scent, went joyfully home, and preached to a glad and attentive congregation. However, his popularity and his very name were offences too great in the sight of the Roundheads of Coventry to suffer him much longer to elude his enemies. A squadron of horse made a sudden march from that city on a Sunday afternoon, and surprised both pastor and flock while engaged at divine service. They rode into the churchyard; and having there dismounted, their commander, followed by a dozen or more officers and troopers, entered the church with their steel caps on their heads, and, by the noise of their steps, would have

drowned the voice of Juxon if he had not instantly made a pause to consider his best course. One look at the leader of this band satisfied him that any appeal to the spirit of love and of a sound mind would be vain ; and a glance through the window had shown him that any resistance by force on the present occasion would only expose his people to a very great calamity.

The commander of the troops was no other than Sir Roger Zouch. Accordingly Juxon said, with a loud voice, " My Christian brethren, the worship of God in this place being thus interrupted, I dismiss you to your homes." His manly tone caused an attention on the part of the soldiery, which produced a short and silent pause, and, taking advantage of this, he solemnly pronounced the blessing with which the service of the church always concludes. Sir Roger, after stammering with anger, now broke out most violently, " Peace, peace ! thou criest peace where there is no peace, thou son of perdition. Come out of thy calves' coop, and make an end of thy pottage. I know thee, who thou

art; thy very name savoureth of all evil: take him out, thou good and faithful soldier of the cross, Zachariah Trim, and that book of abomination with him, and make my passage to yon pulpit pure;—verily I will speak a word to these poor, perishing, and neglected people.” If it had not been for Juxon’s discretion at this moment the church would soon have become a scene of blood; for the stout blacksmith, seeing Zachariah move towards the desk with an action as if he would lay hands on Juxon, interposed with so hasty and resolute a manner, as caused Zachariah to step back two or three paces and draw his sword. His example was instantly followed by many comrades; and the shrieks of alarm among the women and children were dreadful. But Juxon came forth in a collected mood, and so spoke, that the swords were returned to their scabbards, and his people submitted, though in fear yet in silence, while the few among them, who, like the blacksmith, were ready for any hazards, forebore any further attempt at resistance.

Sir Roger ascended the pulpit, put down his

steel cap by his side, poured forth a long, rambling, confused prayer, took out his pocket Bible, and preached for two hours; till the sweat streamed down his bony cheeks, and his voice became hoarser than any raven that ever croaked his sad predictions at a sick man's window. Juxon listened with profound and with indignant astonishment to his wild and blasphemous perversions of divine truth; but he was comforted, as far as his own flock was concerned, in the consciousness that they were better instructed than to be moved by his fanaticism. His manner corresponded with his matter; and if he had not been accompanied by too many and too formidable and ready ministers of his violent will he would only have excited sentiments of disgust and ridicule. But as he thundered forth his curses upon the church in which the poor villagers had been brought up, and described her by a flood of reproachful names and epithets, of which last, Babylonish was the most gentle, no one could listen to his ravings without serious fears that they were a plain preface to deeds of crime.

It was, therefore, with a heart full of devout and sincere thanksgiving for his people that Juxon heard this strange and fierce iconoclast promise with solemnity that their houses and their little property should be respected, and that no one of them should suffer any harm from his soldiers; but that he would take away with him their blind and wicked guide, and would only purge and purify the polluted temple and the priest's dwelling.

The surplice and hood of Juxon had been torn from his back before this precious discourse began, and he had been placed in custody between two armed troopers, with pistols in their hands, and was frequently addressed by the heated Sir Roger in those words which are applied both in the Old Testament and the New to false and unfaithful teachers. All this he had borne with a calm and admirable courage,—feeling within the answer of a good conscience, and supported by an unshaken faith in a God of wisdom and love.

“It is the Lord,” he said within himself, “let him do what seemeth him good,”—and

all the unuttered petitions which his heart sent up to the throne of grace were for the spiritual and temporal preservation of his little flock.

When Sir Roger concluded his sermon, he gave forth one of those psalms, which, being directed against idolatry, he considered as appropriate to the work he now meditated. It was sung in loud and harsh notes by his gloomy looking troopers, after which, descending into the body of the church, he directed fire to be brought, and burned the Book of Common Prayer before the communion table; heaping on the same fire all those rags and fragments of the whore of Babylon, as he was pleased to designate pulpit and altar cloth, and all the decent vestments of the minister.

At this gross outrage, Juxon burst forth with a holy zeal, in a most earnest tone of faithful remonstrance; but he was instantly gagged in a painful mode, and was forced in this state to witness their after proceedings.

The people were now forcibly driven out of the church, and as many troopers as could find room were directed to come in and stable there

for the night. The order was obeyed with tumultuous joy; and they had no sooner taken possession of their once sacred quarters, than they began and completed the work of demolition,—breaking the coloured windows, destroying the tombs, and crowning their work of hell by bringing in a baggage ass, and baptizing it with mock ceremonies at the font. This last work was not witnessed by Sir Roger, who was busily superintending the burning of poor George Juxon's library, and of many *curiosa* in the way of antiquities, which his father had collected in foreign countries, and bequeathed to him at his death.

It so chanced, that the first thing on which the eyes of Sir Roger rested, when he entered the parsonage, was a glass case, or cabinet, in which, among other ancient relics, was a small crucifix, exquisitely wrought in ivory. The sight of this inflamed his zeal to the boiling pitch; and declaring that so great an abomination could only be punished by the utter destruction of the dwelling in which it was found, he called in two or three assistants,

whom he judged qualified to overlook the books on the shelves, to the end that any godly ones might be saved from the general ruin;—declaring, at the same time, that all the silver, and the gold, and the raiment, and the furniture, and the pictures, and the vessels, of what sort soever, whether in hall or kitchen, were polluted, and must be consumed, and denouncing the wrath of God on any of his followers who should presume, like Achan, to appropriate a single article of the unhallowed heap. Accordingly, on the lawn before the windows, a huge fire was made of all these goods, which were cast forth from the windows; the shell only of the house being spared for the use of such godly minister as the Parliament might appoint.

The attention of Sir Roger and the few zealots with him was confined to the contents of the library: not a few valuables, however, from other parts of the mansion, were stolen and secreted by the sly rogues of the squadron. But it so chanced that, as the house was spared, in a concealed recess, behind a false wainscot, his family plate and a few heir looms were

preserved. Of five hundred volumes, however, only three copies of the Bible, also one work in folio, two small thin quartos, and a heap of loose pamphlets of a controversial nature, written by Puritans, escaped the sentence of fire. Upon the same pile, and doomed to blaze in the same flame, were thrown fine copies of the ancient fathers; the works of sound Protestant divines, and ponderous lives and legends of Romish saints; the tomes of Bacon, and old worthless folios on astrology and divination; the plays and poems produced by the genius of a Shakspeare and a Spenser, and the interminable and prosaic romances which, in the preceding age, our ancestors had found leisure and patience to peruse.

During the night, Juxon was confined as a prisoner in one of the out-houses in his own yard, and, in the morning, he was mounted on a lean, bony cart-horse, without saddle or bridle, and led by a small escort to Warwick, where, before he was committed to the gaol of the Castle, he was subjected to the odious and vile insults of an examination before a Com-

mittee of Religion. Three witnesses appeared against him: two of these were base knaves from his own parish, and the third was from Coventry.

Thomas Slugg, the first of these, a lazy hypocrite, who found it easier to affect the office of an itinerant singer of psalms than to dig, deposed that Parson Juxon was an enemy to all godly persons, and a teacher of falsehoods, caring nothing for the souls of his people; and, as a proof, stated that, when, on one occasion, he, the witness, had asked him, "whether there were many or few that should be saved?" he had turned his back upon him, and entered the church saying,—

"What is that to thee? follow thou me."

Another, who was a turned-off journeyman of the blacksmith's, deposed that he saw Parson Juxon one day in a field behind his own garden casting the bar and hammer; and that he, the parson, threw a bar, and a heavy stone, and a sledge hammer, and that the smith, and two farmers, and one Strong, a warrener, threw against him.

The third was no other than the witch-finder from Coventry, who swore that the parson consorted with dealers in magic and the black art; that books on those arts were found in his house, and burned (this was confirmed eagerly by some of the escort), and that he even kept in his pay and service a notorious witch named Yellow Margery.

Juxon listened to these charges with a grave smile, and made no reply. Hereupon one of the commissioners observed, in great wrath,—

“That he was a most godless and obstinate Malignant, as was plain to see by his laughing, and the redness of his face; and that if not drunk, he was merry; but that a gaol and bread and water would soon take away the colour from his cheeks, and bring down the naughtiness of his spirit.”

They forthwith committed him to Warwick Castle, as a soul-destroying hypocrite, who held communion with idle and lewd fellows, and consorted with witches; and they appointed one Mr. Blackaby, a true brother, and bold as a lion for the faith, to succeed him at Old Beech,

directing that he should be protected in his settlement by a detachment from the garrison, until the stubborn people of that village were reduced to submit heartily to God and the Parliament.

The room of the Castle to which Juxon was now removed was a large comfortless apartment with damp stone walls and no fire, containing about fourteen other prisoners, ten of whom were, like himself, incumbents. The two windows of this room looked down upon the river, which washed the very walls of the Castle; and the windows were not only securely barred, but even were it possible to force that obstacle, the fall being very great, any notion of the escape of a prisoner would have been judged an idle fear. However, the faithful blacksmith and George Juxon's groom had followed the escort into Warwick, and watched the courageous parson as he walked with an upright carriage and manly step between the guards who took him to prison.

Having gained information concerning the part of the Castle in which he was confined,

they laid a plan for his deliverance, which, from their knowledge of his strength and activity, they thought possible, though extremely difficult.

They conveyed to him in a loaf of brown bread, which was sent by one of the charity children of the place, and was given him without suspicion, a small cord, of sufficient strength to bear his weight, a small steel saw, and a phial of aqua-fortis.

It was not possible to conceal this from his fellow-prisoners, nor could he desire to do so. They promised secrecy, but dissuaded him from the attempt. That it was very perilous, he well knew; but he resolved upon it at once. In the afternoon of the day on which he received the cord, he saw the blacksmith standing on the river bank in the opposite meadow. The man did not pretend to take any notice of the Castle, but stripped off his clothes and plunged into the water; and it being a cold frosty day, he was loudly laughed at by a group of soldiers standing on the bridge. He swam out into the middle of the stream and back

again; then putting on his clothes, he disappeared.

By two o'clock on the following morning Juxon had cut away a bar, and made fast his cord. Amid the breathless good wishes of his fellow-prisoners he began to descend, clad only in a pair of stout drawers and his shirt. The cord, though strong enough, was so small, that it cut his hands like a knife; but he got safely down to within twelve feet of the water, and from hence dropped into the river; and gaining the opposite side, was helped up the bank by the stout arm of his faithful blacksmith, and hurried to a hedge, behind which he found dry clothes and his groom with two horses. To dress himself, to snap a hunter's mouthful, and to take one draught of cordial spirit from the leathern bottle of his servant, was the glad work of a few minutes; and by eight o'clock on the same morning he was forty miles on the road to Shrewsbury. Among other friends at the royal head-quarters he found Sir Charles Lambert and Arthur Heywood, and at once resolved to follow the fortunes of the camp as a

volunteer chaplain to the regiment of horse with which they were serving. He was present with them in the battle of Keinton; and though decided himself not to use arms, he rode upon the flank of the regiment when it charged.

The horse of Sir Charles being killed under him, Juxon alighted, in an exposed and perilous position, and instantly gave his own to remount his friend. Here it was that, soon after, the gallant boy Arthur, returning wounded from the front, fell fainting from his saddle; and his frightened horse flying fast away, he would have been left helpless on the field before the advancing enemy, had not Juxon been a witness of his distress and danger. Hastening to the bleeding boy, he lifted him on his back, and so carried him a mile and a half to the top of Edge Hill, where a surgeon dressed his hurt, and pronounced it to be severe, but not dangerous, or likely to be attended with loss of limb or any very serious consequences. Having seen Arthur placed safely in a cart with other wounded officers going to a village in the rear, Juxon remained upon the hill, to which the

royal army retired at sunset; and, as he saw Sir Charles and his own favourite roan horse coming safely back at the head of a squadron which had suffered severe losses, his heart swelled thankfully within him. He shook the hand of Sir Charles with a tearful cordiality; and they ate their cold and scanty supper by a little fire in the open fields, with sentiments of gratitude and of piety at once elevated and pure. The crown of England was hanging as it were on a bush, and they were among its guardians. Moreover, there was in both their bosoms a fine consciousness of what was passing in their respective hearts: — to see the noble and miraculous change in a man whom he had once, and with reason, despised, was a rich reward to Juxon, — while Sir Charles sat in the presence of his friend with the sweet and gracious feeling that he had been to him as a guardian angel and as a voice from Heaven.

CHAP. XIII.

Happy are those
That knowing, in their births, they are subject to
Uncertain change, are still prepared, and arm'd
For either fortune : — a rare principle,
And with much labour learn'd in wisdom's school.]

MASSINGER.

ONE fair star was still shining in the eastern sky, and a cool wind, balmy with the odours of spring, blew pleasant upon his cheek, as a traveller, whose dusty feet showed that he had come many a mile upon more public roads, walked rapidly across the footpath-way of a green and dewy close, at the far end of which was the churchyard of Cheddar.

The outline of the tall tower was majestically defined upon the light of the dawning day, and beyond, hidden by well-remembered trees, lay the home of the wayfarer.

In the low grey wall which surrounded this sacred enclosure there was a very ancient stile,

all rudely graven over with notches, crosses, and initial letters. The hand of the traveller was already upon this stile, when he suddenly paused, as though some unwelcome object presented itself, and forbade his progress. His cheek changed, and his heart sank, and he stood as still as though a spell were upon him. Yet it was no uncommon sight that arrested him, and one quite in keeping with the hour and the scene.

A sturdy old sexton, the scarebabe of all the infants in the parish, but the cheerful, though grim-looking, minister to many of his boyish sports and pleasures, was digging a grave under the north wall of the church, and had just thrown up a skull, which lay beside his mattock, near the pediment of the building.

All men are superstitious: — the eye of the traveller, which, but a minute before, was beaming bright with hope, became sad and anxious; his lip quivered, and, instead of vaulting over the stile eagerly, and hurrying to the wicket of the vicarage, he leaned upon the low wall with a feeling of faintness, his sight

became dim, and his thoughts confused and mournful. He had been a long time absent in a foreign land,—some change might have taken place at home; and this idea once admitted to his mind, was followed by a crowd of most natural fears, and of melancholy images. These, however, were soon dispelled by the lively tones of the hale old sexton's voice. To relieve the dull and lonely labour of digging a grave, he was trolling out, in a sort of hearty jig-jog cadence, a fragment of the Mayers' song :—

“ The moon shines bright, and the stars give a light,
A little before it is day ;
So God bless you all, both great and small,
And send you a joyful May.”

This snatch of an ancient medley, so familiar to Martin Noble from his earliest years, called up the memory of May games, and summer days, and a happy boyhood ; and a rush of bright recollections swept away the cloud from his mind, as a clearing wind drives the mist from a mountain top, and lays it open to the glad play of the cheerful sunbeams.

Martin Noble, as we shall hence call our wayfarer, sprung lightly into the churchyard, and approaching the old sexton, thus accosted him :—

“ Good morrow to you, Robert : I am glad to hear your voice once more, and to find you so stout and well.”

“ Kindly spoken,” said the old man, raising his head, and leaning on his spade, “ kindly spoken. Robert is my name, sure enough ; but what yours may be is more than I know, or can guess even, without you are young Blount that went to the wars. Perhaps, master, you made a bit of guess-work, and never saw me before.”

“ No, I am not young Blount, but I have seen you as often and knew you as well as he did ; and to thy cap, thy jerkin, the keys at thy girdle, and thy grizzled beard, thou art just as I left thee, old Robert. God grant that I may find my own dear father as little altered.”

The spade fell from the old man’s hand, and rubbing his eyes as if to clear his vision, at the same time coming closer to his object, he exclaimed,—

“ Odd’s life, you cannot be Master Mārtin that went to foreign parts ? ”

“ Yes, but I am,” said Martin, shaking the old man’s hand : — “ tell me, Robert, is my father well.”

“ Oh yes, he ’s well, — that ’s to say, he don’t ail, as I hear, God bless him ! — but as to well, — I can’t call him well, after all, when I think of a kind soul like him without a —— ”

“ Heavens ! my mother is not dead ? ”

“ Oh no ; but have not you heard of all the changes here at Cheddar ? ”

“ Of what changes do you speak ? I have heard nothing. It was only last evening at sunset that I landed at Clevedon Creek in a fishing-boat which came alongside our brigantine as we were running up the Channel to Bristol. I journeyed hither, as you see, on foot, but I shall know all by going home at once.”

“ Stop, Master Martin, the parson’s house is no home of thine now ; an thou ring the bell, a sour face, and a hard word, and a slammed door, would be thy sorry welcome.”

“ You don’t surely mean that such a man as my father has been taken from his people, and from his own house and home ? ”

“ Yes but I do. The good shepherd is gone, and we have a false goatherd in his place, — a wolf in shepherd’s clothing.”

“ Where then is my father gone ? Where shall I find him ? ”

“ I can’t rightly tell you myself ; but I’ll take you to them that can. It’s somewhere, however, near old Glastonbury Tor ; and they tell me that master is as cheery as ever, though, God help him, he fares no better, as this world goes, than I do. Come, I’ll take you to old Mistress Blount : right glad she’ll be to see thee again, and a sad story she’ll have to tell thee about the old gentleman. God’s blessing on his soul ! — a was the poor man’s friend.”

“ What ! is dear old Master Blount gone ? ”

“ Ay, it’s an awful tale. The mistress will tell you all about it.” So saying, he led the way to a wicket leading out of the churchyard at an opposite corner ; but ere they reached it

he stopped, observing, that second thoughts were best.

"No," said the old man, "if I take thee to Mistress Blount it may get her into trouble, and if I take thee to my bit of a cot, it may bring thee into trouble; for my old woman is as curious as a magpie and as leaky as a sieve, and every gossip near us would soon be on the look-out and the chatter. If thou go to the Jolly Woodcutter, near the Market Cross, thou wilt find old Margery Broad the right hostess: she hath good liquor and few words, and neither meddles nor makes. Go break thy fast, and take rest, and in the evening thou canst set forward for Glastonbury. When the chimes go five, I'll bring one shall guide thee to thy father's."

"Why such delay? I would go at once."

"It will be better for your father that you should not reach Glastonbury till after dusk; besides, you have been afoot all night, and a stretch on one of Dame Margery's pallets will do you no hurt."

With these words they parted, and Martin Noble walked slowly down towards the hostel.

The rising sun was but just beginning to gild the carved pinnacles of the church tower and the tops of the tallest trees. The townlet itself lay, as yet, in deep shadow. The streets were silent, and, but for here and there the figure of a solitary labourer going early to the field, they were empty.

Nobody was yet astir at the Jolly Woodcutter, therefore Martin patiently took seat at the Market Cross, in one of the angular recesses of that ancient hexagonal building which so conveniently shelter poor wayfarers from sun and rain.

As here he mused in silence, his reverie was suddenly broken by a voice from one of the adjoining seats, and he found he was not the sole occupant of the friendly building. His unseen neighbour thus talked with himself, or rather thought aloud,—

“Ho, daylight!—truly the light is comfortable, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun: blessings on the man that built this shelter for the houseless head. Jack, thou art a fool; I say thou art a fool, and I have often told thee

so. Thou hast not one farthing in thy pocket. I tell thee a man with empty pockets is and must be a fool ; and it shall go hard with him if, though he keep his hands from picking and stealing, he be not called a knave also. Here cometh a fellow now, with a red face and a portly belly, who will say me a 'sirrah' to a certainty, and talk to me comfortable words about the gallows. I am penniless, therefore I am a rogue ; I am houseless, therefore I am a sorry vagabond. This is charitable judgment, and sound logic: so said the tapster last night when he thrust me forth into the street, and bolted his door against me. They may call gold poison to men's souls, but I verily think that one broad piece would do me no great hurt. A morning in the stocks, and without a breakfast, will never do : I must be off to the liberal fields, and try coaxing at a lone farm house."

These words were followed by the sound of a shuffling footstep ; and the speaker turned sharply round by Martin's side of the cross, to avoid the questions of a burly personage who

was advancing to call him to account. The figure of the poor wanderer was sufficiently deplorable; yet it was impossible to look upon it without a smile. He was a very tall and a remarkably spare man, with a long pale face, one side of which was contracted so as to give the appearance of a perpetual winking:—his beard was yellow, and untrimmed. He was habited in a suit of plum-coloured cloth, which had been once of the best quality, but was now faded and threadbare:—his shoes were worn out, and he limped, leaning on a stout cane. At one glance Martin saw that he was one of those forlorn strolling players whose services during these times of trouble were no longer needed, and whose age and infirmity forbade him the privilege of following many of his calling to the camp. He was a cast off minister of pleasure, and, like a cracked viol or an empty flagon, thrown aside as useless.

“Whither away so fast, sirrah?” said the beadle, stepping after him; “what dost thou here alone in the street at this hour?”

“Marry I am not alone, but in company that I would be happy to be well rid of.”

“Why, thou knave, did I not see thee rub thine eyes, and shake thyself, and not a soul near thee?”

“Nay, but I tell thee we were three: — first, there was myself; next, there was poverty, a fast traveller, that is even now pinching me, and, thirdly, there was an armed man called want, who belabours me without mercy.”

“None of thy foolery, rogue, or I’ll clap thy claw-foot in the stocks: — thou wilt come to the gallows tree at last; — a sluggard all thy life long, I’ll warrant me.”

“Look you, master, a slug is a fat thing, and a slow, that feeds without working. Now, you see, I am as lean as a scarecrow, and, lame as I am, I will race thee for a breakfast.”

“Out, thou yellow-faced varlet; out, troop away; take thy gabble to the common, and pick thy breakfast with the geese.”

“Have me to thy home, and give me part of thy manchets: it will be all the same, for then I shall breakfast with the gander.”

Till this moment, neither of the parties had seen Martin ; but no sooner did the aged and wandering son of Thespis espy his countenance and smile than he boldly came back, and accosted him :—" Most gallant Cavalier, for by the very curl of thy light beard I see thou art one, help me in my need. Thou seest that I am pricked with many thorns : help me, I say, and so may God help you, and cover your head in battle."

The beadle turned round with surprise ; but before he had time to utter a single word Martin had slipped into the hand of the wanderer a piece of silver ; and as, at the very same moment, the door of the Jolly Woodcutter was opened by a stout serving wench, he escaped thanks and questions by entering the house.

" Silver, by my luck !—silver—and a broad piece ! look you," said the exulting wanderer ; " now begone dull care : let us take no thought for to-morrow ; we will begin our day with a morning's draught of sack, next, we will be clean shaven, for money is a gentleman. We will have a pasty to our dinner, and be a lord

for the rest of the day. A broad piece ! I will drink canary ; and this young cavalier shall hear my recitations, and I will regale him with merry songs. There hangeth a viol de gamba in the barber's shop, and there be a score of old play books on his shelf : we will have a rare evening. I will reward this young master : he hath breeding, and will take pleasure in my company ; let to-morrow take care of itself, or let him take care of it for me : we will drink canary." These resolutions, the natural fruit of Martin's inconsiderate bounty, had well nigh disconcerted his quiet plan ; but, luckily, the thoughtless player had drunk himself into a sound sleep before the evening chimes struck five.

CHAP. XIV.

These black clouds will overblow ;
Sunshine shall have his returning ;
And my grief-wrung heart I know,
Into mirth shall change his mourning.

Psalm xiii.—DAVISON.

MARTIN NOBLE and his guide did not reach old Glastonbury till after sunset. Crossing one of the lower streets of the town, they passed into a suburb of scattered cottages; and turning up a narrow lane by one of those large stone barns that formerly belonged to the abbey, they stopped at the garden wicket of a small lone cottage. Martin stood without while his guide stepped gently forward, that the good parson and his lady might not be overcome by too sudden a surprise.

A light shone through the narrow casement: all objects around were shaded in the soft obscurity of a summer night: the air was per-

fume; and all things seemed hushed into a stillness at once sweet and solemn. Martin passed the wicket with a trembling step and a throbbing heart; and ere he reached the door he was met in the path and folded to a father's heart. Another moment, and he was pressed again to that bosom on which he had hung in helpless infancy. Now the lamp was held up by his father, and his hair was parted from his forehead by his mother's hand, and her eyes rested upon his face and scanned his form; and he felt the unutterable bliss of being the child of such parents. They took him by the hand, and made him kneel with them before God, while they fervently thanked him for his mercy, "which endureth for ever." After a brief pause, they rose; and as Martin looked round on the mean and scanty accommodations of the poor hovel which they inhabited, and then remarked the calm and contented expression of countenance which they both wore, he was lost in astonishment.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, "father, that

you have no better dwelling than this? Alas ! how much must my dear mother undergo.”

“ Your mother, Martin, never had more equal spirits or more regular health than in this humble and obscure cottage. She makes me and herself as happy as, under the painful circumstances of the land, any persons can or ought to be.” Here the old couple looked in each other’s eyes, with that calm fondness which is the fruit of love long tried, and lately quickened by the rude storms of persecution and poverty. But it is to be borne in mind, that in such and all like cases, in times of trouble and confusion, there may be suffering, but there cannot be shame. That which is commonly the most bitter ingredient of an indigent condition is altogether wanting: *there cannot be shame*: neither the sense of it, in those who are reduced to the extremities of need, nor one thought of it in the minds of those who look upon the necessities of their fallen fortunes. Their rags are honest: they can tread the clay floor of a common straw-roofed hut with as much pride as though it were a marble hall. Therefore, where there is health, and the physi-

cal capability of endurance, and where no habits of softness, sensuality, and self-indulgence, have previously enslaved the spirit, and left it tied and bound as a despised victim to be tormented by discontent and peevishness, there will be found a cheerful resignation in the poorest circumstances. Here there was the grace of contentment in daily exercise. Old Noble and his wife were not only resigned but thankful for the blessings of food, shelter, and raiment, and they hopefully made the best of every thing around them.

“Martin,” said his father as he heard the wicket swing, “here is one of your oldest friends coming : you have not forgot Peter.”

“Lord love you, Master Martin,” said the old man as he entered, “I have heard of you :” here he took the offered hand, and bowed his head on it; then again looking up, resumed, “Well if it is not—yes,—no, well, I can’t make you out ; why, how you are grown and altered ! One thing’s right, I see,—you have not got your head clipped and shaved like a mule’s rump.” Here Peter caught a grave look on the face of

his master, and added, "Well, truth's best spoken out: I dont like 'em, the knaves, and I've reasons as plenty as blackberries. Didn't they come a horseback into the church at the christening, and throw over the Font; and has not that prick-eared, tallow-faced rogue, and no parson, stuck it into the ground in our poultry-yard, near the muck-heap, for the ducks to dabble in? and didn't they drive you out of house and home, and throw your furniture out of window, and offer it for sale in the street? and didn't they burn your favourite old books, and break the old lute, and make you and mistress trudge half a winter's night in the mire? and worse than all, haven't they bewitched Master Cuthbert, and changed his nature like, and made him against his own kin and his own king? Rot'em! No rogue like your godly rogue, my old mother was wont to say:—all saint without, all devil within. There, love you, dear master, don't scold with your eyes in that fashion: 'an old dog cannot alter his way of barking.' Come, I've coughed it all out, and it has done me good, and now for salt and

trenchers. I'll warrant Master Martin has got hunger sauce for his supper."

Herewith he set about covering the low table with a white napkin and clean trenchers, and produced from the basket a small mutton ham and some fine heads of sweet lettuce, and a loaf of the best wheaten bread; and setting on one side a small keg of ale, stood up with a look of pride and joy at his master's back, and said, "To God's gift, God send a good appetite."

"How is this, Peter, whence is this?" asked old Noble.

"Why, master, it is from old Mrs. Blount. Wasn't her good man—'peace to his soul!'—wasn't he a church-tenant, and his father's father before him? and was there a day of your life that you hadn't a kind word for him? and does not she know that you have got a stout young trencher-man come to you and nothing to set before him?"

"Well, well, —she is a warm-hearted woman, and always was. God reward her! but sit down, Peter: you and I are only fellow-labourers now; and if you did not handle the spade

better than I do, we should not have fared half so well as we have hitherto:—make him sit down, wife.”

“ No,” said Peter, “ ’t was well enough sometimes o’ the long winter nights, when madam worked her needle-work and you were making nets, for old Peter to have a seat in the chimney-corner, and to hear your blessed voices, and take food from your own hands, and eat it by the same fire; but now, with Master Martin at home, we’ll soon have things right again.”

These few words of the honest and faithful Peter gave Martin a rude but strong outline of all that had been lately passing at home; and it was easy for him to fill in, from the fancy, a picture of the present state of England, by considering the evils to which his own parents had been exposed. As he saw in the person of his own father a pious son of the church, a true patriot, and a loyal subject, trampled under foot by a tyrannous parliament, degraded from his holy office, and ejected from his own house, he felt a deep thankfulness for the providential ordering that had kept him away from England

at a moment of excitement when, unsuspecting of the real aim and tendency of many of the measures of Parliament, he should probably have joined their banners. He was now plainly called to a very different course; and, as there he sat in the presence of his parents, his resolution was silently taken to share the fortunes of the royal army. These things swept across his mind swiftly, and gave no interruption to the glad flow of his spirits, as, sitting once again at table with a father and a mother, he took his cheerful meal, replying to all the questions they asked, and relating to them such passages of his travels and adventures as he thought might gratify or divert them.

When, however, his mother had retired, Martin questioned his father, with not a little anxiety, about the part which his brother had taken, and about the present condition of some of those families and friends whom he had hoped to have met again in happy intercourse. The answers to these inquiries did or the most part convey pain. His brother, it seemed, was among those devout but sincere

enthusiasts, who, offended with certain faults in the government of the church, and certain scandals in unworthy individuals among the clergy, desired a severe purification of the Establishment, and in their zeal for rooting out the tares, were destroying the wheat with them. Upon this subject old Noble was very mournful. He had been himself an epistle known and read of all men : — his life was so pure and exemplary — his habits so quiet — his pursuits so innocent — his teaching so plain and faithful — and his attention to the spiritual wants and the temporal necessities of his flock so constant and tender — that such of the neighbouring clergy as led less creditable lives had long regarded him as a Puritan. The worldly, to whom all tests were indifferent, and who were ready to embrace any profession of faith, and submit to any novelties, whether of doctrine or of discipline, necessary, by present law, to preserve their incomes in peace, had fully reckoned on the sheltering support of his name. But, to the surprize of all, save the few who knew him intimately, he was

found, in the hour of trial, in that humble and hallowed band which took cheerfully the spoiling of their goods for conscience-sake. It was past midnight before Martin and his father parted. In a small upper room, which took the shape of the sloping roof, Martin passed the night upon a clean pallet. He could sleep but little: through the open window came the grateful scent of the honeysuckle, and his eyes rested upon the stars. His broken slumbers were full of strange visions, that crowded on and away in such quick succession as to leave no connected impressions. Of some dear familiar face a sudden glimpse was caught, and lost so immediately as to be a grief; and a familiar voice heard soft and melodious, but the straining ear could catch no word; and then music exquisitely faint and plaintive; and then the stern trumpet, and darkness, and a crash, louder than any thunder, and so sleep frightened from the eyes, and a troubled awakening. But towards morning the blessing came:—a drowsiness stole upon him, and with it a delicious sense of fading consciousness. A sleep deep,

dreamless, and refreshing, was gently and pleasantly chased from his eyes by the play of the cheerful sunbeams ; and through the open casement was poured the varied melody of little birds, that with clear sweet notes were sending up to heaven, with the white incense of the morning dew, their early song.

Martin sprang up with a grateful heart, and looked from the window. The mantling honeysuckle did half conceal him. Beneath the shade of an aged mulberry tree, by a cistern of water which flowed over at a rude lip of stone, and ran away to irrigate the plot of ground in which the cottage stood, sat his mother at her spinning-wheel. In a corner of the garden his father and old Peter were digging. This little bit of land, with a small orchard by its side, was the principal, though not the sole, support of his parents. In addition to the produce of his mother's spinning, her skill in needle-work brought in something ; and old Noble had long ago taught himself to make cabbage nets, twist fishing lines, and turn hackle into flies, with little thought that such pastime should one day

help him to buy bread. However, so many persons of ingenuity had fallen into poverty in these times, that a far walk might be taken, and a long stand might be made in a dull market-place, or at the corner of an inn yard, before a purchaser for such trifles could be found; indeed a sale for any thing beyond necessities could not be reckoned on.

As Martin looked down upon this scene of repose, as he saw his parents safe, in health, and not subdued by circumstances, he could not but feel that the wind of adversity had been tempered to them by that God whose terrible blasts were abroad; that a plank was thrown to them in the storm; that the Father of all mercies was their refuge, and the shadow of his almighty wings was over them for comfort and for good. A pang came across him, as he thought upon his brother. A vista of calamity and war now opened before his startled fancy; but genuine philanthropy, and the love of true freedom, no less than his attachment to the altar and the throne, gave a call to his spirit to which he could not be deaf, and which he would

not disobey. However, he turned from all vain and dark forebodings to the contemplation of present happiness. It was a hallowed bliss to be again near those dear parents who had from his cradle loved and cherished him. Deep-felt pleasure is ever akin to melancholy; and thus it was, that, from excess of happiness, Martin could almost have wept, as he went down stairs, and freely did so as he felt his mother's arms about his neck, and her kiss upon his cheek; but such tears are dried as soon as shed.

The morning rites were performed by his father with the same impressive tones, and the same hallowed composure, that he could remember as having often soothed the little troubles of his boyhood, and which did now again the like office, and calmed the strong but natural emotions of the man.

After their plain wholesome breakfast of milk and bread, Martin took his father aside, and made known to him the resolution which he had last night formed of immediately joining some division of the royal army as a volunteer. He entreated him not to utter one syl-

lable of objection or remonstrance, and not to feel any apprehension of his ever being brought into a distressing situation, as regarded Cuthbert. They should never meet, nor in any way be personally opposed to each other; and the circumstance of his having one son in arms against the King made it necessary that another should more truly represent his father, by being enrolled among the royal forces. He stated both his intentions and his means of carrying them into effect,—at the same time inviting the best advice which his father could offer as to the manner of his proceeding, and the leader whom he should join.

It was not without grief and reluctance that old Noble consented to be so immediately deprived of his gallant boy; and the mother was almost inconsolable at the thought of so early and sad a separation: but that same evening Martin took his departure for Bristol, that he might secure such baggage as he had brought with him from Italy, and equip himself for the camp.

CHAP. XV.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near ;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

MARVELL.

ALTHOUGH Bristol was at this time garrisoned by the Parliamentary troops, Martin Noble and old Peter, by whom he was accompanied, found no difficulty at the barriers, for the city was not besieged, — and being on foot, they entered without suspicion.

The doublet and cloak of Martin being cut in the Italian fashion, he easily passed in that large and busy port as one newly arrived from Leghorn and Genoa, and as one engaged in some commercial venture. His first care was to secure the little property which he had brought from Italy, and which, save one bag of a hundred pieces in ready money, consisted

entirely in paintings, drawings, and engravings, with a few antiques. The value of this small collection might have amounted to twelve hundred pieces. It was now necessary to part with these for whatever they might produce. His object being to send the whole price of them, beyond the sum necessary for his own equipment as a volunteer soldier of horse, to his parents. The captain and crew of the vessel in which he had returned home were all so cheerfully devoted to his interests, that he procured his baggage to be privately landed; and having unpacked and carefully arranged them in his apartment at a large inn near the quay, he went forth in search of a purchaser. He had not far to seek: the contents of an open shop kept by a Venetian in that same quarter at once pointed out whither many a collection of those curious toys of human invention, whether in the fine arts or in plate or furniture, round which the strange children of manhood will fasten fondness, already lay in dull divorce from the pleasant chambers they had once adorned. The broker consented to go to the

inn and look at his pictures with a cold and wily slowness. There was only one small original which had been given Martin; the rest were exquisite copies, executed by his brother artists or himself. The engravings and the articles of *virtu* (many of them presents) were selected with the finest taste; and a magical feeling was associated in the breast of Martin with every trifle or scrap in his portfolios. Though his mind was healthy and strong, and the necessity of the sacrifice was obvious, yet he could bear no work of bargaining, no words of depreciation. He bade the dealer look them over silently, and take them at his own price. Nor was he at all disappointed when the sum of three hundred and fifty pieces were paid down for little heart treasures, from which, in happier circumstances, he would at no price have consented to be separated. Of this sum he despatched two hundred and fifty, by the safe hands of old Peter, to his parents, and the remainder, with what he had already by him, was amply sufficient to purchase a horse, a handsome buff coat, and good arms.

During his residence in Italy, to relieve the sedentary labours of the *studio*, he had always used horse exercise, fencing, and the play of the broad sword, and having a vigorous and comely person and a quick eye, had great skill in all these exercises. He little thought in those days that he must exchange the wonderful art to which his genius was wedded for that of war; the peaceful *studio* and the open landscape for the noisy camp and the cloudy battle-field.

He effected his departure from Bristol, and his journey to the head quarters of the Marquis of Hertford and Prince Maurice, who were then coming westward, with considerable address. By a few pieces well bestowed he obtained passports as a foreign artist for London; and, lading a sumpter-horse with two packages in which his great saddle and his arms were well concealed, he rode his trained horse in such furniture and clothing, and with such a bridle, as disguised its quality. Moreover, by avoiding the large towns, and travelling circuitous ways, through many of those lovely coombes or valleys with which the western counties abound, he

exposed himself to as little observation as was possible. He slept in lonely places under a tree, and he snatched his refreshment through the day at farm-houses or little rustic inns. There was a consciousness in his bosom, that of this brief and precious season of his life the most was to be made. The weaning was at hand: the trials and the solemn chances of warfare lay before him in all their stern reality. The glorious arts were left behind as childish things; and he was passing through those scenes of nature in which the love of heaven is plainly mirrored. He loved the beautiful; in all things loved it: but, alone in the far windings of a sheltered vale, where trees and grass and waters blend their beauties; where cattle lie down, and the white lamb gambols, — with tears of thanksgiving he worshipped. Nor less in the still secluded forest, where rivulets make gentle music, he worshipped. Such spots are sacred: they are not solitudes; they are peopled, most thickly peopled, with innocent spirits, whom we cannot see; but we feel their presence, and tread softly in their quiet paradise. It was the

last leisure of Martin's life, and the sweet scenes coloured his mind for ever; and afterwards, in coarse companies, and in the tumultuous camp, his memory would steal away back to those vales of peace, as to some hallowed visions, and lie awhile entranced, till laughter loud, or cannon's voice, did wake him. It was on this journey that he for the last time exercised the art he loved.

In a deep still valley, with wooded hills on either side, and a small clear river that flowed between them, he stopped at noon before a solitary farm. The goodwife made him welcome. In her little hall she spread his clean repast, and there, in the window, sat her daughter with a child in her arms. It were easy to see she was its mother. If ever face was sweet and comely,—if ever eyes were calm, and brow was open,—if ever human forehead looked meet for the seal of Heaven, hers did, as it shone fair and pure beneath her dark and parted hair. The child, too, was of curly and surpassing beauty, and stretched its little arms with smiles. The obeisance of this young mother was modest,

—but her blush was faint, and innocence itself. A sampler framed in oak hung upon the wall. Martin asked if it was her work, and she said “Yes—the prize sampler worked in her ninth year,”—and took it down; and, in fine needle-work, he read the following lines:—

“ Even as a nurse, whose child's imperfect pace
Can hardly lead his foot from place to place,
Leaves her fond kissing, sets him down to go,
Nor does uphold him for a step or two;
But, when she finds that he begins to fall,
She holds him up and kisses him withal.
So God from man sometimes withdraws his hand
Awhile, to teach his infant faith to stand;
But when he sees his feeble strength begin
To fail, he gently takes him up again.”

QUARLES.

He put it down, subdued to a sudden tenderness, and then asked the name of her child; she said it was christened “Charles,” and then caressed it more closely, and sighed; adding, “It’s a good name, but it has brought me my first sorrow, for it’s with King Charles my husband is; and they that go to the wars may never come back again.”

She resumed her seat in the window; and, putting down the child, who could run stoutly about after his grandmother, she began to ply her needle in silence. Here, as her head was naturally bent downwards, Martin sketched a happy resemblance of her on his tablets, while she, unconscious, sat thinking of her fond husband far away, and daily exposed to wounds or death. Martin rode away from this dwelling; and, and at some distance, looking back, through a summer shower he saw it arched over by a glorious rainbow, and asked a blessing on that fair young mother from the God of hope.

Thus and here he took leave of peaceful life for ever. That same evening his horses' hoofs were clattering over the pavement of a small town in Dorsetshire, filled with royal troopers; and, finding that Robert Dormer, the Earl of Caernarvon, was there in person, his journey was at an end. He had brought a particular letter of introduction to this youthful nobleman from one of his near relatives, then residing at Rome, in a declining state of health, and had been also intrusted to deliver to him a curious

antique ring as a token of the abiding love and friendship of a dying man. The letter spoke very favourably of Martin; but was not written with any expectation that it would be presented under circumstances and with an object like those which now induced Martin to deliver it. He had engaged at Bristol a sprightly young horse-boy, who had whistled his long marches cheerfully by the side of the sumpter-horse, and who was not a little delighted at being now permitted to unpack saddle and equipments, and to see Martin put on a buff coat and a royal scarf. As soon as our volunteer was dressed, he proceeded to the quarters of Lord Caernarvon, sent up his letter and name, was instantly admitted, and met with a kind reception.

The evening was cheerless and rainy, and the Earl was engaged at the game of tables, now better known by the name of backgammon, with a gentleman of a very fine person, about his own age, while a bright eyed youth of seventeen sat eagerly watching the game.

The Earl gave Martin a friendly look, and bade him take a seat till the game was done; for

he had already satisfied himself, by a glance, that it was a letter on private affairs, though he had not opened it.

“ You are from Bristol, young man. What news among our friends in that neighbourhood, or rather among our enemies within ? ”

“ I was so situated, my Lord, that I am not so well acquainted with the condition of the garrison, or the state of the place, as your Lordship. My sole business there was to get my baggage out of the vessel in which I came from Italy, to equip myself for camp, and to join the royal army.”

“ From Italy ! ” said Lord Caernarvon ; “ indeed ! From what part ? ”

“ I sailed from the port of Leghorn ; but came from Rome only a few days before.”

“ Here, Arthur,” said the Earl, “ take my place, and finish the game. — Sir Charles, you will excuse me.”

He now took his letter to the window, and immediately read it with attention. Then approaching Martin, he took him cordially by the hand.

“ I am afraid to ask how you left Edward Herbert ; for in this letter he seems to consider his recovery as impossible.”

“ I am sorry to say, my Lord, that he is a dying man ; but he suffers very little pain, and is as calm and resigned as any person under such circumstances can be. I am the bearer of his last token of affection for the Lady Caernarvon.”

Here he drew forth a small case, containing a signet ring, of great antiquity. Upon the stone, which was a clear beryl, the engraved symbol was a genius, with an inverted torch.

As Lord Caernarvon was silently and thoughtfully examining this gem, the door of the apartment was opened by a grave, mournful looking gentleman in a neglected dress, who said,—

“ Well, Caernarvon, I shall start at eleven, on my return to the King’s quarters, and will direct the escort to march back to you after they have halted eight hours. I shall only take them thirty miles ; and as there is a moon, we shall have a pleasant ride. What have you got in your hand ?” he added, observing the ring.

“It is a farewell token from Edward Herbert to his cousin Sophia: if you remember, Falkland, the youth was a great favourite of yours.”

Lord Falkland took the ring, and looked upon it in silence for more than two minutes, then gave it back to Caernarvon with a sigh, and going close to the window, from which Caernarvon had advanced, Martin distinctly heard him ingeminate the word “Peace, peace,” while he raised his eyes towards the rainy sky. Yet was the tone of voice so low, and it came so deeply from within, that nobody else could distinguish what he uttered; and no one seemed to notice the inarticulate sound, as if it was a habit of grief and abstraction common to the man.

Caernarvon himself was not in spirits the whole evening, — though, as a party of more than twelve were assembled at his supper table, he was necessarily engaged in much conversation on the state and prospects of the war.

However, before this hour he introduced Martin in a particular manner to Sir Charles

Lambert and Arthur Heywood, when they had finished their game; and he presented him to the Lord Falkland, who was very gracious, — but told him with a mournful smile that he must for awhile forget the fair creations of Raphael, and prepare himself for the study of severer subjects.

His relationship to Cuthbert Noble was soon discovered by young Arthur; and it would have been impossible for him to have received more cordial and friendly attentions than both Sir Charles and the boy readily offered. They expressed their sorrow in a delicate yet becoming manner that Cuthbert should be in the ranks of the Parliamentary army, and congratulated Martin, as well as themselves, on the probability that they should be spared the pain of acting, for the present, against that division of the enemy's force with which he was known to be serving, as their own march lay westward, to join the Cornish army.

Martin rode with the regiment of horse commanded by Lord Caernarvon, as a volunteer, and soon became a favourite with that

nobleman, whose excellent example in the office and duty of a soldier it was his pride to imitate. Moreover, this nobleman took delight in the society of the youth, because he himself had, before the war, been a great traveller, and an exact observer of the manners of many nations; not only visiting the south of Europe, but also Turkey and other countries of the East. Therefore, in as far as any alleviating happiness could consist with a campaign life, in a warfare carried on in the heart of one's own country, Martin was fortunate.

Nor is it to be denied that genius has so many sources of enjoyment that in no condition can they be all dried up. To love the beautiful in all things is a high privilege; and feelings of rapture, as of awe, may be extracted from objects which only impress ordinary minds with pain or terror. If the calm lake, the green valley, and the pale primrose soothe us with sweet pictures of peace, the stormy ocean, the rifted rock, and the blasted tree, can and do stir us with a deep delight. Thus war has

its glories and its solemnities for the eye and for the ear of man; and his heart may throb with emotions the most sublime upon a battle-field, and at the wailing trumpets of a vanquished and a flying foe.

CHAP. XVI.

Lastly stoode warre in glitteryng armes yclad,
With visage grym, sterne lookes, and blackely hewed ;
In his right hand a naked sworde he had,
That to the hiltes was al with bloud embrewed.

SACKVILLE.

THE zeal and fidelity of Francis Heywood, in that perplexity and trouble of the Earl of Essex which were caused by the desertion of Colonel Hurry at Thame, and by the information that he gave to Prince Rupert, were so conspicuous, and he rendered such gallant and eminent service in that unfortunate field of Chalgrave, in which Mr. Hampden fell, that he was promoted to a colonelcy of horse soon after.

The army of Essex having been much weakened by the successful enterprises of Prince Rupert, and being also more wasted by sickness, the Earl moved from Thame to-

wards London, and quartered his troops about St. Alban's. Here Francis Heywood met with a very unfortunate adventure, which ended by his taking away the life of a brother officer; but the origin of the dispute and the fatal issue of it were such, that, even by a regular trial before a court of Puritan officers, he was most honourably acquitted.

It chanced that as he was passing before the abbey of St. Alban's a little after dusk, he saw a drunken and noisy procession of the rabble coming along by torchlight. He stopped to see what they were doing: when they approached close to him, his anger and disgust were strongly excited by observing a lewd wretch in a cope trailing in the dirt, with a service book in his hand, singing, as in scorn, the solemn words of the church litany, amid the derision and jeers of the base fellows around him. Francis darted through the crowd and dealt the impious knave a blow which laid him dumb in the gutter; and calling a corporal who came in sight had him picked up and confined in a guard-house for the night. It turned out that

this rogue was a common soldier in the regiment of Sir Roger Zouch, to whom such a representation of the circumstance was made that he took up the matter in great wrath, and sent Colonel Heywood a challenge. Francis immediately sought an interview with Sir Roger, to explain and justify what he had done. This furious fanatic not only defended and lauded the crime of his soldier, but, in a paroxysm of rage, deaf to every argument, rushed on Francis sword in hand ; while the latter kept retreating and expostulating, till at length he was obliged to draw his sword in self-defence.

A home-thrust now soon put a period to Sir Roger's life. Fortunately, this contest took place in the open space near the Abbey, and in the presence of many respectable witnesses both of the army and the town ; and these cheerfully came forward and deposed to the necessity under which Francis was laid to defend himself.

This circumstance made a great impression upon Francis ; for though he stood acquitted in his conscience of all blame, and though he felt

opposed in heart to such a mischievous spirit as that evidenced by Sir Roger, yet it forced him to consider that it was against such men that the sincere churchmen in the royal ranks were honourably fighting. However, he did not slack in his zeal for that cause for which Hampden had already poured out his life-blood ; but he confined himself strictly to the duties of his particular command, and, both by example and authority, enforced good discipline and quiet conduct among his own troopers. He occasionally saw Cuthbert, but had now little comfort or satisfaction from those interviews. In gloom and in sadness of spirits that unhappy man wore away his days : his temper had become embittered and stern ; and he was ever unquiet and restless except in the field, where he delighted to expose himself to every chance of death. It has, however, been often observed, that that black tyrant, insatiate as he is, delights to pass by the wretched, and transfix the bosoms of those whose hopes are in the full blossom of promise. Of this war is ever furnishing examples.

In a temper of mind very different from that

of his brother did Martin Noble make his campaign under Caernarvon.

About the middle of June, Prince Maurice and the Marquis of Hertford, with sixteen hundred horse, one thousand foot, and eight field pieces, marched to Chard, a fair town of Somersetshire, on the borders of Devon, and effected their junction with the Cornish army, which consisted of three thousand foot, eight hundred horse, and four guns. This force soon possessed itself of Taunton, Bridgewater, and Dunstar Castle, without bloodshed. . Not long after they marched upon Wells, where a respectable body had been drawn together by the parliament officers, Popham, Strode, and others: these retired from the city as the Marquis of Hertford advanced against it, and drew up on the top of Mendip Hill; and, waiting till the royal horse came on the same level in front of them, pursued their retreat leisurely, and in good order. The King's horse followed them, till they having to pass through a lane, near Chewton, were compelled, before their entrance into that defile, to leave their reserve fronted,

The Earl of Caernarvon, who was always in the van, and always charged home, perceiving this advantage, rode hard at them, entered the lane with them, routed the whole body of their horse, and did good execution on them for two miles. But the enemy being reinforced by a fresh strong party of horse and dragoons, which, by the cover of a hedge, had joined them without being discovered, rallied, charged, and pressed Caernarvon in his turn, who was now forced to retire through the village and lane, and fall back on the Prince's party, drawn up on the open heath.

Though somewhat broken and chafed, his men rallied stoutly on the Prince's flank; and when the enemy came up, though now very superior in numbers, the Prince and the Earl, seeing the danger of a retreat over those open hills, took the brave resolution to charge them. This was so vigorously done by the Prince, and so briskly seconded by Caernarvon, that after a close and fierce *mêlée*, sword to sword, the enemy were driven from the field, and chased by Caernarvon again till set of sun.

This stirring and brilliant action of cavalry was Martin's first trial; and he acquitted himself in a manner so spirited and valiant, as won the warm praise of his gallant patron. He received two hurts, and was beaten off his horse; but as the army rested many days at Wells, and his wounds were only sword-cuts, he was sufficiently recovered to be on horseback again before they marched forward. In the battle of Lansdown, on July the 5th, he gained fresh reputation; for, having been twice engaged in the early part of that action against the famous regiment of cuirassiers, by which the King's horse were so amazed and staggered, and having shown the most invincible courage in trying to restore confidence to the routed troopers, he was, in the last advance against the hill, dismounted, his horse being killed under him. He was himself at the moment immediately on the right of those brave Cornish pikes which Sir Bevil Greenvil was leading up. He, catching up the pike of a fallen soldier, fell into those ranks, by whom the summit of the hill was soon won, and maintained throughout that

bloody evening. Night fell upon both hosts, tired, battered, and contented to stand still; but before morning Sir William Waller withdrew to Bath, and the field of battle, the dead, and other ensigns of victory, were left with the King's army.

His next service was at Roundway Down, where Sir William Waller suffered so great a defeat as very much clouded his affairs and all his previous reputation. Early in August, Francis was with that army which sat down before Gloucester; but, as the horse are for the most part only lookers on at the operations of a siege, he here enjoyed a certain interval of leisure. At this period he contracted a close intimacy with young Arthur Heywood, and he had a strange pleasure in conversing with the youth about his brother Cuthbert. They two would ride together the circuit of the leaguer, observing the batteries and approaches, and watching the play of the cannon both on and from the city; or they would choose unfrequented roads, which led into valleys near where there was no sight of camp or town; or

in tent or camp but they would sit together for hours, and often as they did so, the name of Cuthbert came up, and the one recollected the brother of his boyhood, and the other, the kind and gentle tutor, who first woke him to good thoughts,—and it became a cement of love between them; and while they deplored the course which Cuthbert had taken, their hearts were full of affection for him. Nor was any one more forward to do justice to his many excellent qualities than Sir Charles Lambert, when he chanced, as he often did, to make one of the tent party.

Sir Charles was, as Arthur told Martin, a changed man from the period when his brother first knew him; and no one that had seen the grave, the manly, and thoughtful deportment of Sir Charles, the loyal and devoted officer, could have deemed it possible that he was the same person who had once invited and deserved their suspicions and their contempt.

However, after lying nearly a month before Gloucester, and making little progress in the siege, the King was roused by the news

that Essex was advancing to relieve the city. A last effort was decided on: the town had been most ably defended by Colonel Massey, the governor, who had made many bold and effective sallies, and interrupted the labours of the siege with good success; but the garrison was now reduced to great extremities for want of ammunition; therefore the King battered the town heavily for thirty-six hours, made a fair breach, and tried an open assault. The attempt was boldly made, and the breach mounted, but, after a bloody conflict, the storming-party was beaten back again. In this last affair Martin and Arthur were looking on at the assault, when a cannon bullet struck and shattered the leg of the latter, so that he was forced to have his limb amputated considerably above the knee, — a most painful operation, which he bore with a cheerful courage and composure. Thus did the service of this noble boy suddenly end, he being made a cripple for life, and no longer able to share the honourable toils of warfare or to partake ever again of the pleasant and joyous exercises natural to his age. The helpless-

ness incident to the last season of life fell suddenly upon him, and made him prematurely old. Martin parted from him as he lay in hospital with tears in his eyes, and they never met again: however, Arthur was removed with other wounded to a place of safety, and when sufficiently recovered was sent to Oxford. Meantime the siege of Gloucester was raised; and, when Essex marched into that joyful town, he found them reduced to a single barrel of powder, and other provisions nearly exhausted. He stayed three days in the place, after which his care was to retire again to London without encountering the King's army. He made a night march from Tewksbury to Cirencester, where he surprised two regiments of the royal horse, and found a great quantity of the King's provisions; hence he made his route through the deep and enclosed country of North Wiltshire direct for London. However, Prince Rupert, with five thousand horse, by incredible diligence and forced marches, got between London and the enemy, and detained him till the King, with his main army, came to Newbury.

The forces of Essex being now intercepted in their movement, it was not the interest or wish of the King to engage in a battle, except on his own terms and with choice of his own ground; but when, on the morning of the 18th of September, the hot spirits in the royal army saw the host of Essex drawn up in fair battle array within a mile, and when they heard the beating of their drums and the breath of defiance from their trumpets, they would not be contained, and some young leaders of strong parties got so far engaged that the King was compelled to fight a general action.

Never did hostile forces meet with greater fierceness and resolution. The field was obstinately disputed throughout the day, and night alone parted the combatants. The foot of Essex had maintained their ground with admirable steadiness; and the bold charges of Rupert and the royal horse could make no impression on their stand of pikes. One of the regiments most frequently exposed to these desperate assaults was that of Maxwell, where

Cuthbert commanded a company of pikes. This corps, after having endured a storm of bullets from a body of the King's musketeers in the last attack of the royal forces before sunset, was come upon suddenly, and at a disadvantage, by some squadrons of horse, and broken in upon. Nearly half their numbers were cut to pieces; but the rest, being well rallied, resisted, and slew many of the horsemen that were intermixed with them, and finally drove off the enemy.

No one exerted himself in this most critical juncture with more energy and sternness than Maxwell; and Cuthbert showed in that difficulty a noble example to his men. His sword had already been plunged into the horse of an assailant with such force, that by the action of the wounded beast he had been disarmed, and another horseman was rushing towards him. He discharged his pistol swiftly, yet with an aim so true, that the young Cavalier was borne past him reeling in the saddle, and thrown violently to the earth.

When this short and confused conflict be-

tween the pikemen and the royal horse was over, and there came a breathing time, and a pause in the fighting at that spot; Cuthbert, who marked where his last opponent fell, left his ranks, and hastened (it was not many yards away) to his succour. The young man, bare-headed and pale, lay upon the ground: his bright hair was dabbled with blood — not his own, but that of other combatants who had been slain near him: a pistol shot had reached his gallant heart; the courageous and gentle spirit had fled.

“Nothing can be done for him,” said Randal, for whom Cuthbert had called,—“come away.”

“Surely, surely there can,” answered Cuthbert, in an agony, strange and unaccountable even to himself.

“Nothing, I tell you: he is dead.”

“Well, then, I will take care of the body, and bury it.”

“Let the dead bury the dead,” said Randal.

“The battle is not over yet. Hark! there is the drum beating to fall in.”

Cuthbert heard it, and the loud voice of

Maxwell, and saw the men rushing to their arms. He hurried to his post; and there, as he stood, saw stragglers coming in, who stopped and stooped upon the very spot where the body of the youth lay, as if to rifle it. His regiment was at the same moment faced to the left, and moved a quarter of a mile off to new ground. Here they halted and stood at ease.

Now came rumours how that great and good men had fallen on the King's side; that the gallant Caernarvon had been slain by the sword, and that a bullet had taken the life of the noble Falkland.

The trumpets did seem to wail them, they sounded so desolate and mournful as the shades of evening came on. As soon as he could get away, Cuthbert again hurried to the place where the corpse of his own particular victim lay. He got a torch, and searched the body, if haply he might find a name: in the bosom next the heart there lay the miniature of a girl of calm pure beauty; from the features and the costume, it seemed that of an Italian. Cuthbert sighed, and continued his search for some

paper that might give a name. At last, in the breast pocket of the doublet beneath his buff coat, he found a letter : — the address was “ Martin Noble,” — the handwriting was that of his own father.

CHAP. XVII.

Lead us from hence ; where we may leisurely
Each one demand, and answer to his part
Perform'd in this wide gap of time.

Winter's Tale.

It is not necessary to the after-story of the persons in our domestic drama that the various fortunes of that unnatural war, which desolated England for so many years, should be further related.

From the bloody field of Newbury, of which we have already spoken, to the close of that mighty and memorable contest which convulsed the whole kingdom, our tale pauses. The imagination of the reader must pass with us in haste across that afflicting season of violence and woe to consider the first-fruits of that harvest, the seed of which had been sown in the whirlwind of human passions, and had been watered by torrents of human blood.

But some slight notices of what passed during this interval among our various characters—a faint outline of their doings, and of the positions which they occupied—may not be without some interest. From the period when we last mentioned him, the health of Sir Oliver declined: he grew infirm; and besides gout he had other complaints, which produced a morbid action in his system, and made him alternately gloomy and lethargic, or sensitive and irritable to excess. Any bad news, a disagreeable incident, a chance crossing of his will, made him angry and out of temper with every person and thing around him. All this Katharine bore with a prayerful composure of the spirit, and was often rewarded by subduing her unreasonable father into sincere and affectionate confessions of that divine mercy, which did in so many things comfort and succour them in this season of common adversity and universal suffering. But there were trials to which she was occasionally exposed that drove her away in agony of spirit, and with a

silent step, to her closet, where she might weep alone.

Sir Oliver had been informed, through the officious and mischievous agency of one of those busy old ladies who had forced their acquaintance on the family, first, that Francis Heywood had been in Oxford with Lord Say's horsemen, and, next, that he had had an interview on the bank of the river with Mistress Katharine. She contrived, moreover, in her relation of the story, under a pretence of feeling for the young people, and of its being so natural and so romantic, to insinuate that it was a prettily concerted meeting. It is not to be denied that she had some materials on which to build up the fabric of her falsehood: for she had seen Jane and Katharine walking in the meadow; she had seen Francis Heywood leap from the boat; and when he came forth from the avenue which concealed both the ladies as well as himself, and walked swiftly into the city, he had passed close under the window of her summer house.

There is a dignity and there is an earnest-

ness in a genuine spirit of truth which command belief and compel admiration. No sooner, therefore, did Sir Oliver first mention to Katharine what he had heard than she told him, with all plainness, in how sudden and unexpected a manner Francis and herself met. She told him in part what had passed between them, and excused herself for not telling him of the interview, by reminding him how very much the sight of her cousin's name in the newspaper had discomposed and excited him; and how, in his own judgment, it had exasperated the symptoms of his disease. By these explanations the old knight was at once satisfied and quieted. Her remonstrance with Francis put aside at the moment all suspicion. At her particular request, he promised that Francis and his politics should be an interdicted name and a forbidden subject. But this resolution was soon broken; for when he heard that Milverton House was burnt down, for a fortnight the name was constantly on his lips, and was always coupled with the most angry and contemptuous lan-

guage, if not by maledictions of a more fearful nature.

At such moments, a sense of his own impotent condition, which forbade him to join the camp, would press upon his mind, till it produced paroxysms of frantic rage. By these temptations a temper less heavenly than that of Katharine's would have been fretted into resistance and contention, — a faith less firm and exalted would have failed. But ever as the tempests of his mind subsided, Sir Oliver felt shame in her angelic presence. He could not indeed apprehend the high order of her mental force; but he could appreciate those solid principles of filial affection that enabled her to endure all things, to hope all things, and that replied to bitter words only by the kindest services, and by the most studious desires to content and cherish him. Through sickness, through pain, through greater reverses of fortune than they at first experienced, — under circumstances which compelled a great abridgement of all their ordinary comforts, — the daughter shone as if she

had been some ministering spirit of love and patience, to whom a charge of peculiar difficulty had been assigned. Nor was this trial of her patience brief. It was not till the winter of 1647 that her chastised parent was removed from his scene of suffering and taken to his rest. The last two months of his existence were, however, marked by a change of temper and conduct very affecting to all who witnessed it; and this proved a reward and consolation to Katharine herself beyond all expectation. Hope, indeed, had never forsaken her; for her hope was ever anchored beneath the mercy seat of that Redeemer who is mighty to save. The old knight became gentle, penitent, tearful:—listened with earnestness to the word of life—was much in meditation—became tender as a little child—was full of thanksgiving and gratitude to his Christian daughter, and expired in her arms in peace. His end was only marked by one painful circumstance,—a last weakness and prejudice, that clung to him even when the ap-

proach of death was manifest, and eternity in view. He declared that he died in true and perfect charity with all men, and with Francis and his father more especially; but he made a request to Katharine, that she would solemnly promise, under no change of circumstances whatever, to give her hand in marriage to her cousin Francis. He confessed to her that, two years before, he had intercepted a letter from him to her address; in which, though he did not suppose them to be responded to by her, his sentiments of love were set forth in plain and melancholy words. Katharine gave the promise required with a low firm voice, and received upon a pale and trembling cheek the cold kiss that thanked her.

The Heywoods had remained in Oxford through both the sieges, and in that city Sir Oliver died. Arthur Heywood, feeling himself by the loss of his limb disabled for all future service in the field, had again entered at his college, and prepared himself by diligent and cheerful study for embracing the profession of

the law, whenever the distracted kingdom should be once more in a state of repose. George Juxon had been for the most part in the field, having accompanied the army of the King as the volunteer chaplain of a regiment of horse; but in the winter of 1645 he made Jane Lambert his own by those sweet and sacred ties which the church sanctifies and records. Katharine stood by her at the altar with that pure and perfect joy which hath its only outward expression in grave and loving looks. For her comfort, Jane was still spared to her as a companion,—a consolation greatly needed, and most thankfully enjoyed; for her domestic trials were of that petty and painful nature, that do especially wear and weary the most generous spirits.

The name of Francis did never reach her ear save through some public channel, and that being commonly a newspaper, printed for the Royalists, she did only gather that he had been present on some fields where there had been obstinate fighting and great loss of lives. The thought of his being slain was one painfully fa-

miliar to her in the still night when she lay awake and prayed for him. Then again came other news in the morning, and his name mentioned as one still riding at the head of squadrons, and present, it would seem, and among the foremost wherever swords were drawn, and service to be done. Afterwards, for months she might not hear his name:—if he was dead, she did not know it; if he was living, she did not know it; and all these silent anxieties most deeply wrought upon her suffering spirit.

At the death of Sir Oliver, the King being now a captive, and the royal cause (which had never looked up since the fatal battle of Naseby) on all sides declining, Katharine consented, at the earnest entreaty of Jane, to accompany the Juxons to Cottesmore, in the county of Gloucester; near which place the venerable uncle of George had an estate and a private dwelling. It was her intention to wait patiently the full end of all troubles or commotions before she attempted to fix her future residence; and then, upon the settlement of her family affairs, to summon back to her that little

orphan girl, just shown at the commencement of this story. That sweet child had been securely placed with the widow of a clergyman in one of the most secluded valleys of Derbyshire, where, safe even from the sounds of war, she had been reared in peace, and educated with religious care. This arrangement had been made by Mistress Alice before her death, from an apprehension that unquiet days were coming; and ample provision for the support of the child had been lodged in the hands of a secure agent in that county.

It was the plan of Katharine, whenever she might again take possession of the Warwickshire estates, to build and endow a college for the widows of clergymen on the site of the ruined mansion of Milverton, and to pass the rest of her days in some quiet and suitable retreat near Kenilworth. But it is premature to speak of the time and manner of a retirement which was not to be realised till yet greater trials than those she had hitherto experienced should come.

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from compassion to his troubled state of mind, gave him such small and easy employments as might not only contribute to his support but might avail to divert his melancholy, and to restore the strength of his shattered intellect. He was not, however, to be engaged in any undertaking which long confined him at home or to a house. He had become one of those rueful objects, of which a few may be found in all large cities, and in the fields and parks in their vicinity. They stray about at will; stand near the crowded pageant; and though they seem to look upon it earnestly, are perfectly unconscious whether it is a funereal procession or the lord mayor's show. They gaze fixedly at buildings and at persons; but the former are to them as clouds, and the latter as trees walking. From frequent and careless exposure to chilling rains, and from his long fasts and the scantiness and irregularity of his meals, his health had suffered seriously: he had a settled cough; and he was so emaciated and altered in the face that hardly any body would have recognised him. Moreover, the change in his

appearance had extended to his dress, which was old, threadbare, and torn. Such was the melancholy figure that came into churches, and sat down upon the benches of the middle aisle; not conscious why he was avoided by the more decent poor, why none but some Lazarus full of sores would take a seat beside him. He hung as a blighted leaf upon the social tree, — a sad memento that man is born to trouble, and that sooner in sorrow, or later in death, all the leaves must fade.

Upon that black day in the calendar of England's history, the 30th of January, 1648, when the last act in the tragic drama of the civil war was presented in public before an afflicted and indignant people, Cuthbert stood among the gloomy and anxious crowd which was gathered round the scaffold at Whitehall. Several regiments of horse and foot were posted near the place of execution, as much to keep the people from hearing their king's last words as to observe and control their temper. The mind of Cuthbert had been roused from its long lethargy by the various news and rumours connected

with the trial of the King, which had been circulated within the last fortnight around him; and he came along with the multitude on this day, not believing that they would dare execute Charles, and that if it were attempted, a rescue would be effected. The day was piercing cold, and the keen wind searched through his threadbare cloak; and he leaned back against a wall, a pale shadow of misery, feeble and trembling. He knew not why he was there, or what he was to do, but when he had seen the strong populace hastening to Whitehall, he had followed a helpless expectant of some strange judgment or deliverance. His view of the place of execution was intercepted by the tall men who stood in front of him and by a trooper on horseback; and he remained still and silent, lost in thought and in confused prayers, till a movement and murmurs in the crowd awakened him to a consciousness of the dread scene which was going forward at a little distance.

"That's his Majesty," said one: "how noble he looks." — "He's speaking now," said another. — "See how grand and straight he

stands up, and how he looks them all in the face." — And from other voices came such remarks, — "See ! the clergy is speaking to him." — "Who is that parson ?" — "'T is a bishop, man." — "Which ?" — "Why honest old Juxon." — "Look ! the King has got his doublet off. God help his blessed Majesty ! O for a few thousand good men and true !" — "Nay, nay, he 's saved. Look ! they 're putting on his cloak again ! Thank God ! thank God !" — But the voice that had uttered this hope was soon hushed, and there was a dread silence, — the people held their breath. Suddenly there arose a loud and universal wail. At the sight of the royal head held up dripping with blood in the hands of the executioner, lamentations, and groans, and tears, and wringing of hands, did make a wild mourning such as became a nation's remorseful woe. Cuthbert smote on his breast, and fell upon his knees, and lifted up his voice, and wept scalding tears, calling himself a murderer and an abetter of the King's death, — one that had, like Judas, sold his master, and that his end would be the same,

and everlasting fire his portion. A knot of persons gathered about him; some of whom, as they heard his ravings, did half believe that he had been more particularly concerned in betraying the King, and looked upon him with horror, as on one suffering the just judgment of Heaven, while others pitied him, and thought him mad. But the troopers being now called upon to dismiss the crowd, two large bodies of horse moved up and down from King Street to Charing Cross, dispersing the folk that had gathered in the middle of the way, while a few single dragoons moved towards the various knots and groups, that still lingered near the walls and in corners, to drive them also away. One approached the small crowd which had collected around Cuthbert in his bewildered agonies; and, either really taking him for an impostor or for a designing person wanting to create a disturbance, came close and gave him a brutal blow with the flat of his sword, bidding him away to his own dunghill, and play his tricks with his fellow-beggars in Rosemary Lane. Upon this, a stout man near, who,

from his knit bonnet and coarse grey coat, looked like a woodman or a warrener from the country, struck the sword out of the trooper's hand, and knocked him off his horse; and the mob would have had his life but for the prompt assistance of his comrades, a few of whom came up led by a sergeant, who, being a reasonable man that felt ashamed for the unsoldierly services of that sad morning, contented himself with releasing the soldier and advising the people to go quietly to their homes. The trooper had been so startled and stunned by the assault that he could not point out the person who struck him first, nor did the sergeant seize upon any one.

The stout man who had resented the blow inflicted on poor Cuthbert raised him up, and led him aside to a more private place, where, they two being alone together, he tried to make himself known, for he had already recognised the voice of Cuthbert; and his soul could, even on that day of public calamity, be filled with pity for this unhappy sufferer. It was George Juxon. Cuthbert, already in a kind of stupor,

produced by great mental excitement on a weak and exhausted frame, and the action of the severe cold of the day upon his naked head, looked vacantly at him, with incredulity and alarm; and Juxon saw that he was not only very ill but that his senses were wandering. He immediately took him home to his own lodgings in a quiet street near St. Paul's Cathedral; and procured the help of a skilful and humane physician.

It was a week before Cuthbert was sufficiently restored to strength either of body or mind to recognise his protector; but when he did so, the face and voice of Juxon appeared to give him the power of recovering his scattered memories and unravelling his tangled thoughts. Nor were the features of Juxon the only ones he was enabled to recall among those kind preservers with whom he had been thus mercifully thrown at so critical a moment of his life.

Jane Lambert, now the wife of Juxon, was one of those who ministered to him in his sickness; and the countenance of Katharine Heywood, no longer radiant with youth, and health,

and hope, but still majestic and merciful as those of guardian angels, shone upon him with a mild and Christian pity. They all viewed Cuthbert as an erring child of a heavenly Father brought back to him by affliction; and they felt that to minister to his sorrows and his need, and to lead him gently to the green pastures and the still waters of Christ's flock, was a sacred duty, and a sweet privilege.

The circumstances of those around him were sufficiently easy, considering the times, to enable them to place him again in his relative station as regarded temporal matters; and he learned with thanksgiving that his father and mother were safe and well, and had been so far assisted as to be comparatively comfortable in the small cottage in which they dwelt.

But it was long before Juxon prevailed with him to return to his father. At every mention of this duty he became silent and gloomy: from this trial he seemed to shrink with dejection and almost despair. His faith in the gracious promises of Scripture failed him, — and he thought his crimes of too black a dye for for-

giveness. One evening, especially, a man coming before the parlour windows and crying certain relics for sale, offered with a loud hoarse voice, — “Most precious remains of his late sacred Majesty of pious memory, warranted genuine, and dipped in his own blood.”

“Here be two locks of hair, master, and three strips of a handkerchief, all bloody, as you see,” said the knave, thrusting them across the rails towards the window where Mrs. Juxon and Cuthbert were sitting. At this sight the poor convalescent fainted, and suffered a relapse, which again disturbed his reason. But as the spring opened, his mind was restored to the vigour of his best days. He saw and embraced his privileges as a pardoned penitent, and he willingly prepared to return to his parents. It was plain, indeed, to himself as well as to Juxon, that his earthly pilgrimage could not be long, for consumption had set her deadly mark upon his cheek; and he was oppressed with a cough which he knew he must carry to the grave with him: but, grateful for the blessings of restored peace and hope,

he took his last farewell of Juxon, and set forward on his journey home.

He travelled down with a train of return pack horses to Bristol, and was five days upon the road. It was the middle of April, but the weather was cold, snowy, and ungenial;—as in some springs there is a brief season of summer heat, so in this there was that sharp and bitter check known among shepherds and countrymen by the name of the black thorn winter.

There was a heavy fall of snow on the very day that he rode from Bristol to Glastonbury; and when he alighted at the small hostel where he was to leave his hired horse, all was dull, still and silent. He had passed through empty streets, and he came to an empty yard, where it was long before a lame hostler, with a sack over his shoulder, and a pair of wooden shoes on his feet, came out to take his hack. It was long, again, before he could procure any one to guide him to Priest Hill Cottage;—at last an urchin with a blue face, and his hands in his breeches pockets, was driven out, by a scolding

landlady, to show Cuthbert on his way. The north-east wind blew keenly, and drove the snow into his face and neck as he followed the awkward and floundering steps of the stupid and unwilling boy: the distance seemed long; and when they stopped before the wicket of the small cottage, it had a most poor and desolate appearance.

Cuthbert paid and dismissed his guide; and now he was alone on the threshold of that father, whose bosom he had pierced through with many sorrows; he was soon to meet the mother on whose breasts himself and Martin had both hanged in the innocent days of infancy. He had one secret in his bosom, which it would be his duty to keep from those parents — that they might not be grieved above measure in their declining years. He was only come for their pardon and their blessing before he died; but he could not open the wicket and go in. In silent agony he raised his eyes to the God of heaven, to implore strength for that solemn meeting. Then came the tempter, and showed him Martin in boyhood, with sunny

curls, and an arm about his neck, running with him down the green slope of the garden to the harbour where their father and mother sat — and then a change came — and he saw the pale corpse, and the bright hair dabbled with blood — and frowning faces looked out on him from the black and laden sky. He felt chill as death and very giddy, and then came a merciful swoon.

What hands were these chafing him as he awoke to consciousness, lying on warm blankets before a fire? — his mother's. What man was this upon his knees, with earnest and moist eyes, that was giving him a cordial with a gentle care? — it was his father: the wanderer was at home again. Words may not tell his happiness; earth has no language to express it: there, near the throne of mercy, to which his grateful heart throbbed up its thanksgiving, there it was intelligible; there good angels heard it, and struck their golden harps to hymns of joy.

There was not in broad England a fireside more sweetly blessed with the spirit of peace and love than that by which old Noble and his wife and their child Cuthbert sat now for

many weeks in quiet company. Not a single look of upbraiding even from old Peter shaded one hour of Cuthbert's life, from the moment when he was brought in from the wicket in the arms of his father and of that faithful old servant. Though quaint, and rough in manner, the man was true and tender at heart. It was enough for him that Master Cuthbert was come home again; and when he saw his hollow cheeks, and listened to his churchyard cough, all the same feelings which he had once had for him during a dangerous sickness of his childhood returned, and he was as gentle and kind in all he had to do for him as a nurse; but this was little,—for a mother was ever at his side: by her hands his pillow was smoothed, by her his back was propped, and his chair placed nearer to the fire; while his father sought to share in all these services, and read to him, and prayed with him, and communed with him through long and precious hours about their common faith, their common hope, and that future and abiding world, where they should dwell as pardoned and perfected spirits, in sin-

less felicity, and in the pure service of praise and love for ever.

They all sat together one afternoon, about the close of May, when it was so warm that even the invalid had his chair moved out of doors for half an hour, and sat well wrapped up, to look at the flowers and the bee-hive. Cuthbert was silent, but a tear stole down his cheek; and turning suddenly to his father, he asked, "Did you see any thing?"

"Nothing," replied Noble, calmly.

"It was a vision then; the mere creature of my own brain: but it was very beautiful. I thought I saw our dear departed Martin."

"That is not surprising, Cuthbert, we have talked together so much about him lately, and you think of him, I know, a great deal; I myself often in my fancy see the dear boy, and probably shall continue to do so as long as I live."

"Yes, that is the natural way to account for it; but yet I have never before pictured him to my mind as I saw him just now. He stood in shining raiment, by the bank of a river that seemed to flow between us, and beckoned me

to come over ; and behind him I saw a field of light, and far off, a city that was bright as alabaster.

“ Father, I have one last request to make—I do not think that I shall be much longer with you—read me the fourteenth chapter of St. John now : there my hope as a Christian was first clearly revealed to me ; there I first cast anchor. O that I had never put out into the stormy sea of controversy ! But it is all well—it is all over now. By the Divine alchemy good hath been drawn out of evil.

“ ‘ O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under thee !
Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty.’ ”

“ You are not, dear Cuthbert, impatient, I hope ? We must all wait God’s time.”

“ I hope not ; but it is better to depart.”

He now listened with the most devout and prayerful attention as his father read to him ; but before the chapter was finished, his head suddenly sunk upon his bosom, and his spirit departed.

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hum of their voices, and of those of the various officials who passed to and fro to the door of the presence-chamber, though not loud, was yet audible and confident; while the little conversation on which the various groups of petitioners ventured was carried on in suppressed tones, or low and anxious whispers.

For three hours the lady remained in the same place, and kept her face averted from the busy hall, and fixed upon the trees without. At last there was a sudden stir and bustle, and when she turned round, she saw the crowd going forth at the outer door; and an usher of the court gave notice in a loud voice, that his Highness the Lord Protector would not hear any further suits that day.

She moved instantly towards the door of the presence-chamber.

“By your leave, gentlemen,—let me pass: my humble suit will not detain his Highness a moment; and to-morrow will not ——”

“I understand you, lady,” said a grey-haired officer, with a manly compassion; “but his Highness has passed into his inner presence-

chamber, and is engaged with the great officers of state. He will not allow any one to approach him now; and he does not use to see any private petitioners after. No one dare present himself at the door of that chamber now; and we may not suffer you to pass."

"Well, sir; but I will wait till the council is over, and then, perhaps, he will admit me. To-morrow will be too late," she added, and turned away her head.

"Certainly, lady, you may remain awhile, till the council comes forth; and he never consults long with them; but if your suit touches any of the poor gentlemen about to suffer for the late treason, I fear there is no hope of your success. He hath refused many well-supported memorials for some who were but slightly connected with the offence, and whose friends have great personal influence with himself. Indeed, he cannot pardon them, with safety to his government."

"It is not for a pardon that I come, sir, it is only for leave to part with a dear relative, who is sentenced to die as to-morrow; and I am

denied admission to him, without I bring an authority from the Lord Protector himself."

"In as far as I may serve you, lady, in this matter, I will surely do it." So saying, he crossed to a gentleman who sat at a table in the outer presence-chamber, the door of which was standing open, and conferred with him, giving the paper, with the prayer of her petition, into his hands. He returned, saying, that the secretary would present it as soon as the council broke up, and then placed a chair for her in the window near. In less than half an hour, the great officers of the council came out, and crossed the hall—the guards standing to their halberds. The lady rose, as they passed, out of respect to their offices; and they, with grave bows, acknowledged that courtesy—not aware, perhaps, that she was only a trembling suitor for their master's "Yes." But this was not given, as a matter of course, when the secretary asked it. The Protector questioned him closely concerning the aspect and manner of the lady, and ended by commanding her into his presence.

She was ushered into the inner presence-chamber, the door closed behind her, and she found herself alone before Cromwell. He stood on the far side of a table, with one hand resting upon it, and her memorial in the other. The table was covered with papers, and directly near him was an ancient desk of ebony, with an hour-glass by the side of it, and three or four books, one of which was a Bible. He was dressed in a suit of black, and his costume would have been plainer than any about the court but for the extreme richness of his Flemish lace collar and cuffs; but these were cut after a plain square fashion, and not in the Vandyke pattern of Charles's reign. He avoided noticing her obeisance, for she did not kneel; and, after a considerable pause, he raised his eyes slowly, and fixed them upon her with a penetrating and a severe expression. It was a trying moment for Katharine Heywood,—for she was that lady; but she had been silently lifting up her heart to God, and she returned his look with dignity and composure. She could not but be impressed with awe in the presence of

one so powerful ; and there was nothing in his cloudy and grave deportment calculated to relieve that feeling. At last he addressed her : —

“ Thou comest to us on the matter of this poor and deluded man, who hath fallen into the snares of Satan, and hath attempted to fight against the Lord. It is vain to petition us in this matter : we are to this unhappy and distracted kingdom in the place of the angel of the Lord ; and we must not bear the sword in vain. As we are man, in so far we are weak, poor, foolish, frail, blind, unstable, like unto the light vane that turneth with every breath of wind ; but, in that we are the angel of this people, chosen of the Lord, set up in the place of judgment, our wisdom and strength, our counsels and actions, are from above, and we are strong, rich, wise, indestructible, discerning all things ; steady, fixed, constant in our purposes ; immovable as a great rock, that smileth at the madness of those waves that dash around it. — Do not interrupt me, woman. I know what thou wouldest say : I can tell thy thoughts afar off, and see tears before they come to the eye-

lids. I must not pity. He that hath covered my head in battle appointeth the doom of this troubler of Israel. His is the sceptre, and the sword is his. I am but the poor unworthy instrument by whom they are borne. I am no more but a poor Jack of the clock-house, and strike the stroke of righteous vengeance, even as that automatus toy striketh on the bell, being moved by the organs and machinery of the skilful constructor or contriver thereof. Thou understandest me? I like to speak plain, that my poor people may see what a very worm of earth is every child of Adam; and how little store I set by all the baubles and gewgaws of power and state. It is known how a yhole nation did weary my spirit with petitions to take upon me this grave and weighty office, which I would gladly have foregone, if that I might have declined the cross without sin. But such peace was not for me." During this strange address, Cromwell looked alternately at the paper in his hand and at Katharine Heywood; dropping his eyes on the former, and then suddenly raising them again, as if to catch some

expression of her countenance, which she would not willingly wear while his eyes rested on her : but there was about her a majesty sad and unmoved ; the seriousness of her displeasure was grave ; and she was fortifying herself by mental prayer. The Protector perceiving this, abruptly and without a pause, changed his manner and tone : — “ You are the wife of the condemned ? ”

“ Not so, my Lord, I am his cousin.”

“ What is your name ? ”

“ Katharine Heywood, Sir : it is written on the petition.”

“ What Heywoods ? ”

“ Those of Warwickshire.”

“ Ha ! Malignants — Malignants : — Sir Oliver was one of them : a staunch slave of that foolish and misguided man, Charles Stuart.”

“ My father, sir, was a faithful subject of King Charles.”

“ And you, woman — ”

“ I obey the laws. By my sex and by my sorrows I have been taught thankfulness for any government that brings peace.”

“ Out of thine own mouth is thy rebel cousin condemned. How came it that all his relations were not instantly arrested? But thus it is. Thus am I served by indolent and purblind knaves — the serpent and the woman :—thus it ever was, and will be, the boldest treasons are ever hatched by women. Where dost thou live?”

“ At Cottesmore, in Gloucestershire.”

“ How long have you dwelt there, and with whom?”

“ Since the death of my father, I have lived in the family of an ejected minister, named Juxon, a nephew of the bishop.”

Cromwell bit his nether lip, and passed his hand quickly across his brow.

“ I did not think that bluff old man was a plotter. They told me that he was turned hunter again; but it is me that they would hunt. My soul is as a partridge on the mountains: they hunt for the precious life;—but,” he added (recovering the tone which a gloomy and passing emotion had discomposed), “ it is the Lord: it is he that hath called me.

I am his servant, and no weapon formed against me can prosper. Who are these that would disturb a peace which the Lord giveth, and kindle again the fires of a civil war which I have been commanded to extinguish? and so thou livest near this merry old hunter that would have my life?"

"My Lord, it is not so: the bishop meddeth not with any public affairs, and I have never seen him smile since the sad end of his royal master. No, sir, he doth only hunt for health and diversion of his mind, which is ever occupied at home in dull cares and grave studies."

"That soundeth true of him. I do remember that he was accounted honest; and that, from his youth, he had a body comely and quick—apt for that manly sport;—but still, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who may know it?'—How long is it since thy cousin was at Cottesmore?"

"He was never there."

"Is this true?"

"I would be sorry to utter any thing which

might, by possibility, be proved mistaken ; but, to my knowledge, he was never there."

" And how long, then, is it since you have seen him ?"

" It is many years since I have seen him ; nor for these two years have I even heard of him."

" He was an officer of the Parliament ?"

" He was, sir ; and was made a colonel of horse, in the second year of those wars."

" I remember it. Ere this, he might have written general, and baronet to boot ; but he was hot, and wrong-headed."

" 'T is better as it is : his heart is right,—and he hath less to answer for."

The eyes of Cromwell rested upon the countenance of the majestic Katharine with severity, and with a surprize that seemed to ask the meaning of words so strange and cold. But the tone in which they were uttered, and the sudden mournfulness and abstraction of her gaze, told him that emotions, both strong and tender, were working in her bosom.

" And your prayer, lady, is that you may be

permitted to take leave of your cousin before his execution?"

"That is my prayer."

"It is not wise. I speak as to a Christian mind. Though none hath shown himself more bitterly my foe than this cousin of thine, yet he was no assassin. He was, I know, for a warlike rising: his obscure lodging was found full of arms; and though he lived as frugally as he that laboureth for a groat a-day, yet was a horse worth fifty pieces, and trained for the great saddle, found in the shed, behind the small house where he lived. I have shown him all the favour in my power:—the sentence and manner of his death are changed. His life is a forfeit to the weal of England. I am no man of blood, lady:—the signing of death-warrants is no joy to me; but one example on a scaffold may save the lives of thousands. Lady, your visit will only disturb his last moments. I have cared for his soul:—a godly minister doth see him; and I learn that he doth exercise himself as a dying man should. It seems that you have not seen him for many

years:—he will not expect thee—does not think of thee:—cousinship is not so close a kindred. I cannot grant thy prayer.”

“My Lord, I am his nearest relative—his only relative now living in the land. We were together in our youth. I would not fail him in this hour. At such a time, to feel that he is not forsaken of all men must be a comfort to the spirit. Besides, he may have parting words for his distant father, and parting words are precious. Oh, grant my suit, your Highness! on my knees I humbly ask it—I implore it. Oh, grant my suit! I will not let you go till my poor prayer is answered.”

Katharine had approached, and fallen upon her knees, and in her hands she had clasped the skirt of his dark cloak.

“Lady, control yourself: I have a human heart—but duties are too sacred to be foregone for tears. I cannot grant your prayer.”

“Why not, my Lord? Oh, why this strict and stern refusal? Oh, deign to tell me what makes you thus cruelly dismiss me?”

“It were to commit evil against thy cousin’s

soul, and to defeat the ends of public justice : I can tell by thy lofty eyes thou wilt carry him the means of death."

Katharine rose from her low posture with a look of reproof to the suspicious usurper at once dignified and solemn.

"Francis Heywood, my Lord, is of a nobler spirit than to tarnish his brave life by an end so mean, and hath too holy a trust in his Redeemer's mercy to shrink from his appointed trial. But were he other, and I found him so, and with a poison cup at his lips, this friendly hand should dash it from them."

"You speak of what you know not : the most valiant heart that ever beat might yet shrink from the shame and dishonours of the scaffold."

"Shame and dishonours ! Where are they ? 'Tis not the place or manner of a death can make them ; besides, the scaffold hath now become a dying place of kings, and meaner men may hold themselves ennobled by suffering like end. I promise by all my love towards my gallant cousin, by all my truth, and all my hopes of heaven, to hold no word of conference

with him on any matters save our private love as cousins, and our common faith as Christians."

Just at this moment a door leading to the wing which Cromwell inhabited slowly opened, and a lady, with a gracious but most pensive face entered a little way and gently called him. He turned: the gloominess which had gathered over his brow at Katharine's last speech was dissipated at the sound of her soft voice: he went to her, but before Katharine could address an appeal to her she had left the chamber; and Cromwell, returning to the table, took a pen, and wrote on the back of her petition an order for her admission to the Tower, and to the prison of Francis Heywood; then, with a grave and not an unkind look, he put it into her hand.

She glanced at the writing:—"Add another word, my good Lord,—the body:—Oh, grant me that! When the bloody axe hath done its work, let the body be my care:—we grew together in our youth, — I would not have his precious remains buried by executioners." Cromwell took back the paper, and, without uttering a word, wrote the permission.

CHAP. XX.

Nor death, nor sleep, nor any dismall shade
Of low, contracting life, she then doth fear;
No troubled thoughts her settled mind invade:
The immortall root of life she seeth clear,
Wisheth she ever were engrafted here.

HENRY MORE.

It had been arranged between Katharine and her ever-constant friends, the Juxons, who had accompanied her from London on this melancholy occasion, that she should go to the palace alone, while they awaited her return on the bank of the river. They had come from Westminster by water in the morning; and, in the event of her petition being attended with success, were to go back in the same manner direct to the Tower.

They had been provided with a swift four-oared boat, well manned, hired for the day; and while Katharine was in the palace, Jane and her husband sat under the trees not fifty

yards from the river, and in sight of the boat. The men had been cautioned against drinking or straying, and having shown all civility and attention, rested idly on the bank, to all seeming in contented obedience. But whether their patience had been exhausted, or the mournfulness of the party was displeasing to them, or they felt bribed by the chances of feasting and merriment with some party of pleasure, just before Katharine came down to the river, they suddenly took boat and rowed swiftly away, unheeding the loud and vain remonstrance of Juxon.

By this petty perplexity she was for some time delayed. It was long before any conveyance could be found. Every horse—every carriage—every boat was out. It was one of those delicious days, when all the world, as by common consent, keeps holyday:—when sorrows, disappointments, wrongs, and sordid cares are left within doors; when grass is in its greenest beauty; when hedges are white and sweet-scented; when lovely blossoms cover all the orchards; and flowers are every where, and

foliage is fresh and young, and birds are in full song.

Absorbed, patient, unconscious, Katharine sat still, her hand within that of Jane. Juxon at last returned, rowing a small wherry himself, and placing them in it, made for the Tower with his best vigour. He said little; but as he passed the numberless boats, which were crowded with glad and joyous groups, here noisy with laughter, there vocal with sweet and innocent songs, the natural expression of youthful enjoyment, his heart bled for Katharine. But, in truth, all these sights and sounds gave her little disturbance — they were unheeded. Her spirit was preparing for a great trial, and was lying low before a hidden throne, imploring strength.

As soon as they reached the neighbouring wharf, Juxon accompanied her to the gate of the Tower, promised to provide a lodging for the night in that neighbourhood, where they might all remain, and to return for her.

And now this sad and gracious woman was left to pass through all the slow and cold for-

malities of admission alone. By no less than five different officers was her paper examined; and with some there was unkind delay, and with others, the rude questioning of an unfeeling curiosity. At last came the prison itself. Here the order from the lieutenant of the Tower having been duly recognised was obeyed in surly silence, by a stern-faced gaoler and his assistants. Heavy doors were slowly unlocked; and harsh and grating sounds, and the clank of keys, and the turning of strong bolts, made her blood chill.

A lighter door, as of an apartment, was at length unlocked quietly, and she was ushered into a chamber, where her cousin sat at a table writing, with his back to the entrance. He did not, at first, turn round, fancying it was one of the gaolers. One grated window in his front, having a northern aspect, looked out upon a wall so close to it, that not even sunshine could be ever visible upon it. There were a few books upon his table:—here, too, there was an hour-glass. A little very ancient furniture, of oak, relieved the nakedness of the

walls; and there was an aspect in the gloomy room which did properly belong to the prison of a state criminal of rank.

The conductor of Katharine respectfully announced a visiter, and as immediately withdrew, and turned the lock. Francis rose:—he recognised Katharine at once, and with a mute embrace; then placed her with reverent tenderness in a seat, and went for a moment to the window, to recover his composure, after which he came and sat down beside her. Katharine was collected, and did not shed a single tear; but the first words she would have uttered died within her, and found no voice. Francis took her hand in a grave, calm manner:—

“Remember,” said he, “my dear, beloved Katharine, that this must be no melancholy parting. If any thing on earth could make me loth to quit it, most true it is, the thought that it must yet, for a brief season, be your dwelling-place, would make me cast a lingering look behind. But even that I have struggled with and conquered; nor does your presence shake my resolution. You must rejoice with me—

not weep. It is a bad world, sweet cousin, and I have been among the worst upon it. But I have found the Great Deliverer; or, rather, have been found of him; and I do look beyond it now:—ay, Katharine, and have done so for many years. My spirit panteth to be gone; and well I know that thou art only kept on earth, as angels are, to minister God's mercy to the wretched. I knew that I should have thy charitable prayers, but did not think to see thee. How didst thou gain admission? It has been denied to some of my true friends. Besides, I thought thee far away, and wrote especially to the tyrant's private secretary to say that we had had no intercourse for years; and that you knew nothing of my actions, nor were you even acquainted with any of the Royalists engaged. I marvel much this favour hath been granted me, and humbly thank my God for this last blessing."

The while he spoke she looked upon him steadily, and at every word did gather strength and peace.

"How is it, Francis, that I feel no grief?

How is it that I have stood face to face to-day with Cromwell without a falter of the tongue? How is it that I feel this nearness of thy death as if it were the appointment of some hallowed honour to wipe out all the noble errors of thy deceived heart, and write upon thy tomb their glorious confession? I did ever love you well, Francis — now better than ever. We are no longer young: I can read in your worn lineaments, as in a mirror, the lines of care, which Heaven has traced upon mine own. Your hair is grey, and war and woe have done their work upon you, and quenched the brightness of your eye of fire. Now you are dear to me;—now that you stand upon the verge of the invisible world, prepared, with prostrate heart, and with courageous faith, to enter in. I do not come to weep with thee:—your spirit kindles mine — I will rejoice.”

“There spoke the woman of my love—of my heart’s choice. Katharine, I do own to thee, that when I did engage with this last band to strike a blow for freedom, and when

discovery came, and chains and judgment followed, the thought that you would know my last true effort, would call it constant, honest, and drop a tear upon my grave, was a strong cordial to my wearied spirit, and did enable me to look at Cromwell in all his state and power with a bright defiance. I do marvel that he granted me this favour:— what said he?”

“ He did not do it readily. He spoke you fair and justly as a soldier; but only in one point he did you grievous wrong.”

“ In what? I pray you name it.”

“ He seemed to fear that I might bring you poison or a dagger — and so the scaffold lose a victim, and baser men an example for their terror.”

“ And what said you in answer?”

“ I told him that you had a nobler scorn of death, and a holier fear of God, than so to sin against your soul.

“ He said that bravest men might dread the dishonours of the scaffold.

“ I told him these now were no dishonours

— that it was a place ennobled by the blood of a royal martyr.”

“ Dared you so much ? How looked he ? ”

“ He loured and bent his eyes upon the ground. Just then his lady daughter entered. She whispered him, and, as I think, did plead for me — for, after she went forth, he wrote the permission instantly and more. The after-sentence is remitted : — then, when the axe hath done its cruel work, thou art mine, Francis — these hands shall fold thy grave-clothes.”

“ Angels of heaven ! are ye listening, are ye present ? Yes, her steps are compassed round with holy guardians ; her strength is more than mortal. Am I then helped in this my only trouble ? this the last weakness of my shrinking nature ? Have my prayers been heard, and have I been cared for as a timid child, by him who sitteth on the mercy seat ? The tyrant told you truly, Katharine ; for he, half hypocrite, half hero, is brave as his own sword : — yes — brave men may shrink from the rude shames done on their lifeless bodies. Remember, noble woman, that this last great

charity doth take away the only bitterness that made my cup to taste of terror. Now my heart is light, and leaps within me, as if I felt its pinions struggling to be free. To-morrow is as a bridal-day to me."

During this speech Katharine was so much overcome that big tears rolled down her marble cheeks, and she sought relief in prayer. Her eyes were raised to heaven in silence, and for a few brief minutes not a word was spoken by either; for Francis kneeled beside her, and his heart was lifted up in devout and still communion with hers. Being calmed and strengthened by this exercise of faith, Katharine was again able to address him.

"Your hours are now precious, Francis; let me not dare to waste one golden moment of them: whatever may be your last desires and wishes, tell me, that they may be religiously observed."

"They are not many: these papers, which one broken hour of the night will give me time enough to seal, I would have conveyed by a safe hand to New England; and perhaps one

line from you might comfort my father's heart. These few books I would also have sent to him. This, Katharine, is my Psalter : take it ; and till we meet in a better world use no other. Now hear me ; and, for both our sakes, observe my last directions strictly. To-morrow morning, from the hour of eight to nine, keep closely to thy chamber, and shut thy door, and do not look abroad ; but make this Psalter thy companion, and read therein the choicest words of praise and thanksgiving. Yes, praise and thanksgiving : — remember this. If that I am a pardoned sinner, and that I am pardoned a humble voice within me whispers, and visionary hands do point to him the blessed of the Father, who hung on the accursed tree, and died that we might live. If it be so, then to-morrow I shall cross Jordan at the narrowest point, and see that heavenly Canaan where happy spirits dwell : there we shall meet again. Hark ! there be footsteps. One last embrace : — farewell."

The door was unlocked, and a minister of a countenance most kind and holy did softly enter. He paused, irresolute at the sight of

Katharine, and would have withdrawn till their interview might end.

“Nay, my reverend and dear friend, come in, I prithee:—this is the lady of whom I spoke to you: my only relative in England. She hath come to do me the last charitable offices of earthly love. You are prepared, I see, to comfort and refresh me. My cousin will keep this feast with us.”

At these words the good man entered, bearing a salver and a cup, over which a white napkin was decently spread; and when the door had again been closed, and the clank of the keys at the gaoler's girdle had died away in the long passages, and the world and the world's sounds were all shut out, that dull and grated prison became a temple,—and they three in a mournful humility did make their meek confession, and in faith, hope, and charity, did feast upon a Saviour's love.

CHAP. XXI.

Dear beauteous death, the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere but in the dark :
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark !

VAUGHAN.

THE good old vicar of Cheddar, and the aged partner of his trials and his consolations, survived the melancholy war which brought so much public misery on the nation, and so much private affliction on themselves, for many years. They continued to dwell in the same small cottage, in which, after the ejection of Noble, they found their first refuge, unknowing and unknown. Their means were slender, but their wants were few; and they were rich in the graces of divine contentment.

As with advancing years the strength necessary for manual labour declined, there came such little improvement of circumstances as

enabled the worthy man to dispense with such exertion; and the toil of Peter was lightened by the assistance of a younger labourer. Noble himself walked regularly every Sunday of his life to attend divine service at a small village church distant from his cottage about a mile and a half; and old Peter and he sat together in the back seats under the gallery. His wife being feeble on her limbs, and dim of sight, remained at home; and it was Noble's pleasure to bring back to her the text of the sermon and the matter of the discourse.

This church was served by a Puritan divine, who held a benefice five miles on the other side of it, and rode over to the hamlet for one full service in the afternoon. The lord of the manor was a nobleman who had been distinguished during the war; and who, after the close of hostilities in Ireland and the establishment of the protectorate, had retired to this mansion and estate, where he led a very secluded life, seldom stirring beyond his park wall. But he was a pious and charitable man, well spoken of by his servants, and by the poor

of the village as a Christian master and a considerate landlord.

There was something very fine and very affecting in the consideration, that an aged minister, ejected for conscience-sake, should sit every Sabbath as a humble and loving Christian listener, under the ministry of one young enough to be his son, and to find in him a helper of his joy.

The young man knew not whom it was his privilege thus to strengthen and comfort; for there was a meekness and a shy reserve about Noble, and an enjoined silence to Peter, which repressed and baffled curiosity. They just knew so much as that one was a deprived clergyman; but whether he had been turned out for scandal, or what his story might be, none cared to discover more particularly; — he was an accustomed sight.

It so chanced that, one Sunday, when the congregation was assembled at the usual hour the young minister was not forthcoming. All persons had taken their seats. The lord of the manor was in his pew; and, after a long pause,

the singing was begun, in the expectation that perhaps he would yet arrive time enough to conduct the worship; but the psalm was concluded, and he did not appear.

There was an evident disappointment on the countenances of all the people; and the grave nobleman, after leaning over his pew, and summoning the clerk, decided to sit down again, and linger yet a little time. Another psalm was given out and sung through, — still no minister arrived.

At last, moved by a constraining principle of love to the great and Divine shepherd of all Christian flocks, and by a pure love to the souls of the people, Noble came forward with lowliness and composure, and told the clerk quietly that, being himself an ordained minister, he did not feel it right to let the people go empty away, without offering in such manner as he could to feed them; and that if there was no objection he was ready to go up into the pulpit. To this arrangement there was an immediate assent from the nobleman, to whom the clerk referred it; and old Noble, for the first time

since the day when he was driven from Cheddar with blows and insults, found himself in the place and office of an ambassador for Christ.

He was manifestly supported in this moment by the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind. His prayer was serious, simple, and plain as the utterance of a child. Out of the abundance of his heart he offered up his petitions with reverent fervency and confiding love. The chapter which he selected for reading was the fourth chapter of the first Epistle of John ; and, taking the tenth verse of this chapter for his text, he declared fully and freely that blessed message of pardon, reconciliation, and peace, which it is the most precious privilege of the Christian minister to deliver, and to deliver which is a duty of sacred and perpetual obligation. Mercy and grace fell softly from his lips, and distilled like the gentle dew upon the hearts of all his hearers.

The poorest and least instructed could understand every thing he said ; the most learned and advanced among them found a master in Israel, walking with a secure footing on the

very summits of the mount of God. Unseen by Noble, the young minister entered, when he was in the middle of his discourse, and stood with rapt, devout, and breathless attention to its close. The rugged old warlike nobleman had early risen, and leaned over his pew with eyes fixed upon the preacher, and half the congregation were in the like posture of attention. Of all this Noble was utterly unconscious: his own gaze was perfectly abstracted; he saw nothing, he thought of nothing but the Divine love. He magnified it; he set it forth in the chaste radiance and the heavenly light of Scripture language and Scripture imagery. He commended it to the hearts of all around him, by speaking of it experimentally, gratefully. He showed what the world and society would be if subjected to its influence: drew the mournful contrast daily presented to the eye; and, towards the close, he drew aside, as it were, the curtains of the skies, and displayed the world of light, and the redeemed of the Lord walking, as angels, in an air of glory. When he had concluded, he kneeled down to pray: his

few first words, though not quite so loud as his sermon, which had been preached in very subdued and quiet tones, were distinctly audible; but, then, they became faint and unintelligible, his grey head bowed down upon his pale hands, and both rested without motion upon the dark cushion of the pulpit.

The young minister was the first to perceive his condition, and the first to run to his succour. With the aid of Peter, he brought him down and out into the summer air, and laid him on the grass, and loosened his vest; but the body itself was no longer any thing but a put-off garment: — the spirit was far off, breathing already the air of that Eden which is above.

The young minister accompanied Peter back to the cottage with the precious remains, and, leaving them at a few yards' distance, entered first, and broke the loss to his aged partner. She felt it deeply: but as all the circumstances attending it were truly and tenderly related, the grief of the woman yielded to the faith of the Christian; and, while tears rolled down her

withered cheeks, she was enabled to bless and praise her God.

From that day, to the hour of her death, that youthful minister took her to his own home, and was to her as a son.

The very same day which witnessed the sudden and solemn removal of the good old vicar of Cheddar brought a summons to his base and hypocritical successor in that vicarage. As the crafty and bitter bigot was crossing his yard with a more hasty step than usual, his foot tripped against the edge of the BROKEN FONT, which he had put in the ground near his ash-heap, to hold water for his fowls. He fell to the ground with such violence as to produce a compound fracture of his thigh; and, after the lingering torments of a very long confinement, died in the greatest agony of body, and in hopeless terror of mind.

While this unhappy wretch lay upon his bed, in the first week after his accident, the body of Noble was brought to Cheddar for interment by the young Puritan divine, of whom we have

spoken in the foregoing part of the chapter. The whole village poured forth to meet the body: the large hearted young minister performed the funeral service; and, indifferent to what the rigid party might say or think, he read over the grave of the departed vicar that solemn and sweet office for the burial of the dead which was, in those days, a forbidden charity to men who had suffered cheerfully the loss of all things rather than give up the sacred ritual of their church, or take the covenant which the faction in authority would have tyrannically imposed upon their conscience. The dropping of a leaf might have been heard in the green churchyard as that service was read; and a crowd stood listening with bare heads and serious eyes. When the last rite was done, and the earth was filled into the grave, fresh and verdant sods, which had been most carefully cut in a neighbouring paddock, were placed over it orderly and firm, and these again were so thickly strewn over with the choicest summer flowers as to be almost concealed by

the profusion, while a fragrant and grateful incense, more pleasant than "precious ointment poured out," filled all the place with a sweet promise, that the name of the righteous should live.

THE END.

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